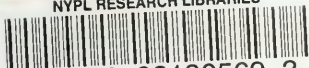


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LETTERS

ON THE

EASTERN STATES.

BY WILLIAM TUDOR.

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON :

WELLS AND LILLY—COURT-STREET.

1821.

H. P.



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NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following Letters, addressed to different persons, were principally written within the last year. The reader may consider them to be dated in Boston. The subjects are so miscellaneous, that the simplest method of arrangement seemed to be the precedence of date ; in which order they are here placed.

SEPTEMBER, 1819.



PREFACE.

THE first edition of these Letters was published at a distance from the author, and from manuscripts that had not been copied ; these circumstances may partly account for its numerous errors. The prefatory note attached to that edition, has the original date restored ; which the printers without any attention to its connection, altered to the time of publishing the book, and thus rendered a few statements and allusions contradictory.

The author is indebted to the Editor of the National Gazette for a very courteous notice of the work. He has still further obligations to the Editor of the North American Review for an extended account of it, in which one of the offices of criticism was exercised in the most lenient manner, the full extent of which was not appreciated until he came to this revision. The objections made by both these gentlemen—very accomplished judges—are indisputably well founded ; yet they were perhaps nearly inevitable, under the circumstances in which these Letters were written.

The form of the work is not wholly fictitious, though much the largest part was thrown into this shape for convenience. There may be a slight degree of ridicule, in giving the name of an author to a work of this kind ; but particular circumstances would have made it more absurd to withhold it. It is

neither a statistical work, a Traveller's Guide, or a production of fancy. The object was to give just notions of a distinguished section of the United States, and incidentally of the nation at large; with the hope of conveying information even to Americans, and placing strangers in the right paths for investigation. It was written in a desultory way, without the aid of any books, being the result of long and various reflection, with some opportunities for observation, and under very slight subjection to any sect or party.

In wishing to avoid exaggeration, the author may not have done justice to some of the topics he has treated: they will not be injured by this reserve. He imposed on himself a rule not to speak of individuals, which is observed with very few exceptions. It would have added much vivacity to some parts of the work, and afforded him a particular gratification, one from which he was hardly restrained, to have spoken of several remarkable persons in our society: but not being an adept in personal panegyric or satire, he was more anxious not to shock that feeling in regard to bringing before the public private anecdote and character, which, whether it be owing to modesty or prudery, is so prevalent among us.

The intention of remedying the defects that have been pointed out was given up, after finding on consideration, that it would be necessary to remould the work entirely. The author has therefore limited himself to correcting the numerous verbal errors, and adding a few illustrations either in the body of the page or in notes. With these amendments it is again submitted to the indulgence of the public.

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LETTERS,

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LETTER I.

ON CERTAIN FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

THE advice you wish me to give, my dear friend, in a certain quarter, would be useless. I have long lost all influence there, if I ever had any. Counsel from me to avoid exposure to the pestilence, would rather induce your kinsman to encounter it, and run the chance of the contingency, to prove me wrong. I believe, however, that your fears are needless, and you may safely calm your solicitude:—Were it otherwise, I could hardly partake of it. I am glad that your own experience and feelings, make you think death such a misfortune for others: for myself, I think it far from being the worst thing that can happen to us, and there are situations in which, though it would not be justifiable to seek it, 'tis not worth the trouble to avoid it. I have felt many moments when

it appeared a desirable alternative.—I rejoice that you have not found life, to borrow the exasperated expressions of Helen M'Gregor, "the same weary and wasting burden that it is to me ;—that it is to every noble and generous mind." But I have so much reason to regard its loss with indifference, that I can but faintly participate in your apprehensions. To say the truth, I am at times seriously tired of this chrysalis state of existence, and feel a wish to be trying my wings in a different region. You know that I am not sullen, nor careless of your anxieties? but if my views are gloomy, are not your fears unfounded? or if not unfounded, are they not exaggerated? This is a subject that will bear the support of poetry: let me recall a passage that you are well acquainted with.

—————Reason thus with life :—

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
 That none but fools would reck ;—a breath thou art,
 Servile to all the skyey influences,
 That do this habitation, where thou keep'st,
 Hourly afflict. Merely thou art death's fool ;
 For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
 And yet runn'st tow'rd him still :—Thou art not noble ;
 For all the accommodations that thou bear'st
 Are nurs'd by baseness :—Thou'rt by no means valiant ;
 For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
 Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,
 And that thou oft provok'st, yet grossly fear'st
 Thy death, which is no more. Thou'rt not thyself :
 For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains,
 That issue out of dust :—Happy thou art not ;
 For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get,

And what thou hast, forget'st :—Thou art not certain ;
 For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
 After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor ;
 For like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
 Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
 And death unloadeth thee. Friends thou hast none :
 For thy own bowels, which do call thee sire,
 The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
 Do curse the *gout*, *serpigo*, and the *rheum*,
 For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth nor age,
 But as it were an after-dinner's sleep,
 Dreaming on both : for pall'd, thy blessed youth
 Becomes as aged—and doth beg the alms
 Of palsied Eld : and when thou'rt old and rich,
 Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
 To make thy riches pleasant :—What's yet in this
 That bears the name of life ? yet in this life
 Lie hid more thousand deaths ; yet death we fear,
 That makes these odds all even.

Yet I do not wish to bring you to my conclusions ;
 and if these arguments have an influence that way,
 you know where to find in the same admirable
 drama,* the opposite side of the question, stated even
 more eloquently, and with an effect that will make
 you shudder.

You will do me the justice to acknowledge that,
 whatever may be the course of my reflections, I do
 not often talk or write in the strain I have here been
 led into ; but it may be a fit occasion, after this intro-
 duction, to make some remarks, which I once promis-

* Measure for Measure.

ed you, on the subject of funerals, as they are practised in the eastern states. The traits of peculiarity which distinguish them are all derived, like many other things in our habits and customs, from the practice of the forefathers, and are considerably tinged with that stoical spirit, which the circumstances they were placed in, and the austere principles of their religion, combined to produce.

In that lot which is common to all, it might have been supposed, that some similarity of practice would have taken place. Yet the manner of disposing of the body after death, is almost as various as are the causes which produce it. The Hebrews gathered the bodies of their friends to the bones of their fathers, in caves. The Egyptians embalmed the frail tement, which becomes so ignoble the moment the ethereal spirit has fled, and thus handed down to posterity their hideous mummies; the Greeks buried or burned their dead indiscriminately; among the Romans, the bodies of the great were always burned. Some savage nations expose their dead on scaffolds, to be devoured by birds; others commit them to the current of some sacred stream, to be consumed by fishes. The first Christians adopted the practice of burying, which was partly induced by some points of religious belief, and confirmed by the gradual introduction of many superstitious practices, till this method every were accompanied their religion.

The Romans erected their mausolea on the sides of their highways, or at the entrance of their country

seats. Now and then an individual, in modern times, recurs to the practice of antiquity. The late Duke of Oldenburgh, the most virtuous and estimable prince of his time, built, by the side of the public burying ground of his little capital, a tomb with the form of a small Grecian temple, in the simplest Doric style, and in the purest taste; in this were to be deposited the urns containing the ashes of his family, whose bodies were burnt in a small building adjoining. The Marquis of Stafford has placed opposite the entrance of his residence in Staffordshire, a stately tomb for his family. But the common custom of the Christian world, is the literal fulfilment of the precept, "dust to dust;" and the place of deposit is either within the walls of the church, or the surrounding cemetery that is consecrated with it. In this country alone,* is there any deviation from this solemn, affecting, yet often noxious usage. It is solemn to place the remains of our friends within that sacred temple, which is dedicated to God; it is affecting to offer our devotions, surrounded by the graves of those we have loved; but in great cities, it becomes as noxious to the living as it is useless to the dead, and a wise police has gradually prohibited it in most countries, or at least diminished the evil, by reserving such sepulture for those of high distinction.

* The deputies who were sent to this country from Pernambuco, in its recent revolt, made a visit to Boston, and nothing appeared to strike them with more surprise, than the seeing some burying grounds in the country, unprotected by, and out of sight of, any church.

Funeral ceremonies are every where different, and people of different nations would mutually revolt at those to which they had not been accustomed ; for when the feelings of religion and the anguish of grief have combined their effects on our minds, we are particularly shocked at any thing that differs from us. In the south of Italy, the last care of friends is to array the deceased in a full dress : if a man, his hair is powdered, a sword put by his side, and a bouquet at his breast, and then the body is delivered to monks, or to one of those benevolent fraternities, that devote themselves to the service of the hospitals and the burial of the dead. The appearance of these processions is appalling ; the persons who compose them, wear a kind of hood of linen, black or white, as the rest of their dress may be, and which falls down to their waists : it has large apertures for the mouth and eyes, so as to form a sort of mask ; their aspect suggests to those who see them for the first time, that it is a collection of spectres who are taking charge of the individual, who has just entered their ranks. The corpse is taken by them through the streets, exposed on a hearse, and carried to some church, where a mass being said over it, the sexton receives it into his possession, strips it naked, and buries it. Nothing can be more repulsive to unaccustomed eyes, than this hideous contrast of ghastly death, with the gaudy trappings of dress. In England, according to the regulations of an ancient law, partly sumptuary and partly to encourage the woollen

trade, the body is always shrouded in woollen ; thus making even the dead contribute to the promotion of manufactures. A Neapolitan, on seeing one of these plain shrouds, would be shocked in turn, and ready to exclaim, with “ poor Narcissa.”

“ Odious ! in woollen ?—’Twould a saint provoke.”

At Florence many corpses are taken to the Cathedral by the monks, to have the funeral service performed ; the churches in Italy are always open, and during a short residence in that city, I used to go every evening, towards the close of twilight, to take some turns in that vast and gloomy Cathedral, when a faint gleam was admitted through its elevated windows, barely sufficient with the aid of a few lights on one of the altars, to distinguish the columns and prominent objects of the interior. There seldom failed to enter one of these funeral processions, the monks beginning to chant the solemn *de profundis*, as soon as they crossed the threshold. Their torches flung a passing glare on the walls, the flash of which hardly reached the top of the immense dome which towered above them, like the lofty vault of some gigantic cavern. I used to follow them to one of the interior chapels, and when the service was over, with its last echoes in my ears, groped my way out of the church, and hurried to the opera house, only a few yards distant : the King of Etruria, then sovereign of Tuscany, and his family, with all the brilliant society of the capital, were there assembled amidst a profusion of

lights and the sounds of animated music—for the first moments after this transition, the songs of the opera did not exclusively occupy my meditations ; yet I would not have exchanged them for all the relish of the finest *bravura*.—But it is not always necessary to cross the Atlantic, to witness striking contrasts between the gaiety and the inanity of life. A few years, since, particular reasons made it my duty to attend the funeral of a young and beautiful girl, who was remarkable for her blooming health. She had accepted an invitation to a splendid ball ; a sudden illness intervened—and on the evening it took place she was deposited in her grave. The tomb was under a church, the vault of which was lighted up for the occasion. I listened to the recital of the sublime and most affecting burial service over the body of this unfortunate young person, saw her deposited in the tomb among the mouldering coffins of her relatives ; and directly afterwards, went to the party, dazzling with lights and elegance, where her companions were leading down the dance ; not one of whom perhaps had so fair a chance of life, when the invitations were given, as this sweet young creature, who thus had been snatched from the midst of them.

In visiting a cemetery one day, near a city in Italy, the sexton conducted me into a small building by its entrance, where the bodies of three or four children were lying on a platform. They were all very prettily dressed, and the head of each adorned with

a wreath of flowers. Ignorant of this custom, I believed them to be asleep ; and thinking it strange they should be in this situation, I started a little on approaching, and perceiving they were dead. The grave-digger asked me, if I was afraid of “ *questi angelini* ?” a delicacy of expression that struck me in one of his profession. They had been brought that morning, and with all the other corpses that might come in the course of the day, were to be stripped and then deposited in the same pit, which was not to be opened again till the expiration of a year. There is one for every day.

An equal diversity prevails in the management and appearance of those enclosures, which protect our final quiet home. Those cemeteries where repose “ the countless nations of the dead,” are as unlike, as the dress and language of their tenants while living. In some, the ground is thickly studded with monumental stones, which vainly endeavour to prolong the memory of those who have already mingled with the earth beneath ; while others show nothing but those slight swellings of the surface, which, even in a desert, immediately indicate, that they cover a being who will disturb it no more. The Quakers, consistently, with their levelling policy, unwilling that human vanity should attempt by perishable distinctions, to destroy that equality which death has produced, exclude monuments from their burying grounds. The Catholics generally do the same ; a cenotaph is placed in a church, where the deceased

is of high rank : but Protestants in most countries, give monuments of some kind to their friends and families : to the former this seems an idle vanity. When Buonaparte, in one of his early visits to Italy, first saw the English burial place* at Leghorn, which is filled with monuments, he exclaimed, “ See those proud islanders, vain even in death.”

In some places the burial ground is never entered but by the sexton, with the funeral convoy, and the rank grass rustles unheard ;—in others, the sexton pastures a cow ;—what a practice, and what a perquisite ! In some, the public pathway crosses the ground, that some steps may be saved in the brief bustle of the plodder who passes it, unheeding what he treads on ; and vagrant boys are seen making the memorials of the dead serve the purposes of their idle play : in others, they form public walks, where children are carried for the air in the morning, and assignments are made for the evening. In some countries, the tomb once built, the task of vanity is discharged, and it is left to itself and to the injuries it may encounter ;—in others, affection supplies the place of a monument, by careful and repeated visits to the grave. At the great church of Rosschild, where lies “ the majesty of buried Denmark,” the sides of the church are in divisions, that might be chapels if they were not tombs ; where all the noble families of the

* It is commonly called so, as there are more of that nation than of any other ; but its real appellation is the Protestant burying place ; because persons of that sect from all nations are buried in it. There is one other devoted to the Jews, and one to the Catholics.

kingdom have their deceased relatives deposited in coffins of brass and lead, with their gaudy coverings fallen into hideous ruin from damp and rottenness, and exposed to view through iron railings. In the churchyard and church, the graves of humbler individuals are kept in the neatest order, and every Sunday their friends arrange them afresh, and place upon them bunches of flowers. Observing in the floor of this church, a stone covered with wreaths of flowers, I asked the sexton, what person had been just buried there. "O, sir, that was the wife of our pastor : she has been dead several years, but she was very much beloved, and some of the parishioners bring fresh wreaths of flowers every Sunday, and every one takes care not to walk on them." A grave in the yard, which was very carefully kept, and on which two or three bunches of flowers were sticking, he said was preserved in that state by the children of a parent, who had been buried there many years before. These affectionate demonstrations of remembrance, may recall to mind the interesting anecdote which the ancients have related concerning the origin of the Corinthian order. The mother or nurse lamenting the death of a young girl, placed on her grave a basket, containing her toys and playthings, covered with a tile. It chanced to be placed on a root of the acanthus : the leaves of the plant growing up around it, and obstructed by the tile, were bent over, so as to form very nearly the appearance of the Corinthian capital. Callimachus happened to

see it, took the hint, and formed the Corinthian column, the most elegant of the orders.

There is one inconvenience attending the cemeteries of cities, which all mankind naturally revolt at, and which draws from every one, the imprecation contained in Shakspeare's epitaph ;—they must in time become so heaped up with the spoils of mortality, as to require removal to prevent pestilence. The most remarkable instance of this exhumation took place in Paris, and several years were occupied in the task, which was performed without being generally known to the public. It was commenced previous to the Revolution, but the operation continued under all its political changes. The immense collection of bones, which had accumulated in the burial grounds of that great city during the course of centuries, were thrown into the quarries which are near and partly under it. These excavations are commonly about one hundred feet below the surface, and may now, like the subterranean galleries and quarries of Rome and Naples, be called catacombs. The fancy of the French has, however, exerted itself to produce the most singular exhibition in the world, consisting of a variety of ornamental objects, which were never before formed of similar materials. These bones have been piled up in various forms, such as obelisks, columns, pyramids, &c. ; various inscriptions are scattered about, and with the aid of torch-light, the inhabitant of this living world walks through extensive galleries and chambers, surrounded by the re-

mains of countless thousands. In a few minutes he may pass from the bustle, the frivolity, the gayety, of a brilliant capital, to the caverns beneath it, filled with the relicks of those who in their time also "played many parts ;" and the mementos are innumerable, to enable the philosophic speculator, after a visit to these regions of the dead, to assure those he has left that "let them paint an inch thick, to this complexion they must come at last."

To return from this digression. When our ancestors first landed in this country, their numbers were so few, that the death of an individual was like a loss in a family: the decease of one of their number was a common concern; it made the loneliness of their situation still more apparent, and naturally carried their thoughts back to the country and friends they had left, the recollection of whom often filled their minds with sorrow, in spite of their heroic constancy; these tender recollections came over them with accumulated force, when one of their little band was taken away. The death of an individual, was one of the most interesting events that could happen to them, and the funeral of the deceased was attended as a solemn duty by all, when all participated in the bereavement.

There was another motive that produced this general attendance; this colony was a religious one, founded expressly for religious purposes; a funeral was an occasion when religious feelings and impressions could be most strongly produced. The precari-

ous tenure of our existence, which was then so strikingly obvious, was made use of for the purpose of exhortation, to devote themselves to the constant consideration of their future state, and to give themselves exclusively to the service of God, whose worship after the dictates of their own conscience, was the cause of their expatriation. A funeral was therefore a religious observance which none could neglect.

Our ancestors had left a country they loved, to encounter the unknown horrors of exile in a new and distant land. Their minds were elevated to a high pitch of steady enthusiasm, which could alone have supported them, under the difficulties and dangers they were exposed to. By such men, all the enervating emotions of grief and despondency were discountenanced. A stoical disregard of common sufferings, and of tender feelings, was a practice of religious duty. The nourishing of grief and the indulgence of excess in sensibility, were frowned at; a submission to the Divine will, and a subjection of all their passions to a rigid discipline, was constantly inculcated. Parents were called upon to yield their children, wives their husbands, and children their parents, without a murmur. All the dearest relations were habituated to attend the obsequies of their deceased relatives, and follow them to the grave. Thence arose the practice, that even the nearest relations, in the deepest moments of affliction, followed their friends to their last home. It was expected that a mother should see her beloved child, or the dear

partner of her life, deposited in the grave, with pious resignation, and witness that agonizing ceremony, while listening with indescribable horror to the sound of the earth falling on the coffin of the most beloved object of her heart.

This fashion continued when the original purpose, or motive, had ceased, and when the sternness and austerity of their manners and habits no longer existed, so as to afford them any particular gratification in the practice of it. In the course of time, too, as their numbers increased, and a diversity of interests prevailed, the unity of their social state was broken up, and the sort of sympathy, which had existed in a small community, diminished. The forms, however, continued, and the processions lengthened, till at last they were composed of very incongruous materials; of a few wretched sufferers, who followed the hearse with eyes blinded with weeping, and faltering steps, and with a long train of others, who were performing with indifference or unwillingness an irksome duty. This mode of funerals continued till its inconveniences reached their height. A few years since, the procession was made as long as possible; the relatives, male and female, all walked; the acquaintances of both sexes followed, and a train of carriages, generally empty, brought up the rear; the bells were all tolling, and not, as now, at intervals, but without ceasing; so that the original purpose of this ceremony of tolling the bells, which was to keep the devil from coming within the sound of them, to annoy

the dead, was very effectually answered. It was considered a mark of sympathy, and called for by decorum, to walk, however bad the weather or the walking might be. Few more effectual modes could be devised, for laying the foundation of a new funeral. This bringing together crowds of indifferent people, produced nothing but the grimace of solemnity; and the scene so admirably described at the funeral of Mrs. Margaret Bertram of Singleside, in Guy Mannering, had here many prototypes.

The inconvenience began to be gradually remedied: the bells ceased their incessant clattering, and were struck only at intervals; * the nearest relations, females at least, were excused from going to the grave; no females walked, and in many cases there was no procession on foot. The desire of a long procession begins to be less an object of pride; and the vanity of a "*grand burying*" is becoming more and more confined to "people of colour." A few individuals have dispensed with public processions, in the case of any of their families. The decease of an individual is announced in the papers, for the information of acquaintances, but the funeral obsequies are private, and the ceremonies are fulfilled by the kindness of half a dozen, intimate, sympathizing friends. This practice will gradually become universal. The useless cruelty of forcing agonized hearts to follow to the grave; the unfeeling indecorum which requires a display of their anguish to the gaze

* The tolling of bells is since entirely given up in Boston.

of the public, and the collecting a crowd of indifferent people to go through a useless ceremony with reluctance, will all be obviated. A great deal of idle expense will be saved, and often to those who can ill afford it. This last consideration should weigh with persons by whom expense will not be felt, to make retrenchment in the practice of the most superfluous of all vanities, that others may follow their example, and not waste in burying the dead, what is wanted for the subsistence of the living.

Our burial grounds in large towns throughout the United States are too much crowded, and too much neglected. They have a desolate look of abandonment. At New-Haven there is one on a better plan, and which forms an interesting object. A reform in our cemeteries would be honourable to public feeling. An ample piece of ground selected in the vicinity of large towns, from land which would be of little value for any thing else, should be devoted to this purpose. It would be easy, without great expense, to give the walls and entrance an appropriate appearance. The yew, the willow, and other funereal trees, would form suitable ornaments within. A sufficient space might be allowed to different families to decorate as they choose, and where their remains would repose for ages untouched. A certain degree of care should be bestowed in keeping the enclosure and its alleys in a state of neatness, which would seem a decent remembrance of the dead. Such a cemetery would be an interesting spot to visit; and when dispirited

by unkindness, misfortune, or that listless satiety, that makes life insipid, a walk among the graves of our friends might sooth the mind into composure with this evanescent scene; make it look forward with calmness, if not complacency, to the time when we shall be re-united to those we have lost; when we too shall be, where “the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

LETTER II.

POLITICS.

MY DEAR SIR,

THOUGH we have worn different cockades, and marched in separate columns, our ultimate views have terminated in the same point—the happiness and solid glory of our country. If our prejudices have led us to sympathize with particular individuals, we have not felt the less contempt for the mere “drummers and trumpeters of faction;” nor been blind to the obliquities in the political course of those, with whom we were enlisted. Local circumstances may have given a different appearance to our opinions, as it has to our dress; but this very variety was adopted to preserve comfort and health in the latter, and consistency in the former. We may differ about details,

or the merits of this or that individual ; but in most of the essential points of policy we have fully agreed ; and during the present political truce we may take a retrospect of the past, with so much more candour, as in the future combination of parties, whenever the strife is renewed, the *personnel* will be different, though the *materiel* may be the same.

It is as easy to imagine a river without banks, as a free government without parties. Without the one and the other, the current would be stopped in both, and both become stagnant. Parties which tend to preserve the constitution in a sound and vigorous state, may sometimes, by intemperance and diseased action, cause its destruction. Every man who is not a visionary, knows, that their existence is at once inevitable and indispensable ; but all enlightened and independent minds will be careful not to identify them with their country. They will consider them as the means through which that country may be served, yet will not confound the means with the end. In extreme cases the one must be abandoned to preserve the other ; and so long as a people continue intelligent and virtuous, they will not be doubtful which is to be sacrificed.

Every man who has had much party experience, must sometimes be disgusted with the tools he is obliged to use, and tired of the course he is impelled to pursue. The opinion of one of the most thorough partisans of modern times, whose political writings are as clear and correct, as his philosophical ones are obscure and false—I mean Lord Bolingbroke—may be cited as

an authority *ex cathedra*: “A man who has not seen
 “the inside of parties, nor had opportunities to examine
 “nearly their secret motives, can hardly conceive how
 “little a share principle of any sort, though principle
 “of some sort or other be always pretended, has in
 “the determination of their conduct. Reason has
 “small effect on numbers. A turn of imagination,
 “often as violent and as sudden as a gust of wind,
 “determines their conduct; and passion is taken by
 “others, and by themselves too, when it grows into
 “habit especially, for principle.”

It is very injurious to a party to remain for a long period in opposition, since they will, in the course of it, inevitably fall into relaxation or inconsistency; and their adherents are lost by the one, and disgraced by the other. A party, on the contrary, in possession of power, however mean may have been their origin, gradually increase in strength and respectability, till a vast majority of the nation is on their side; and then presumption or false views commonly occasion their ruin. These remarks are certainly applicable to the two great parties in the United States. The federalists showed too much presumption from having founded the constitution, and from having so many illustrious men among them. Your friends began their career with no great stock of character in some sections; and sacrificed for a time the vital interests of the nation, to the acquisition of popularity. Their numbers increased first by intriguers, then by the indifferent; till at last, in some of the states, there was not a private or a subaltern left on the opposite side.

The force of circumstances, and the very possession of power, obliged them to adopt sound measures of policy, and to promote those very objects for whose destruction they came into office. Their opponents gradually went over to them, and the federal party would have become even sooner extinct, if considerations of local policy in particular states had not still maintained the name, as a matter of convenience.

This cessation of party at intervals, must inevitably take place, from the nature of our political system. An occasional fallow in the field of politics affords a fertilizing repose ; it prevents the rank growth of party from exhausting the soil of patriotism. That there will always be materials for opposition, follows of course ; but a continuity of opposition in any one body of men is impossible. Perhaps the revolution of parties may be calculated hereafter with as much precision as the return of comets ; but we have not sufficient experience now to fix their periods. The first party was undermined at the end of twelve years ; yet this was effected by a most skilful statesman, singularly qualified for the task ; and even he would not have succeeded at the time, if he had not been aided by the contagious violence of the French Revolution. The process, whenever it is attempted, will be nearly the same ; the cry will be economy, &c. &c. ; but there is so little of mere populace in our country, that so long as the administration preserve a due share of discretion in the management of affairs, the operation of subverting them will be slow. How long the present succession of things may last,

it is impossible to say ; but a complete revolution in the cabinet must be more and more difficult to accomplish. The old or federal oppositionists have become the supporters of the administration, though neither officially nor officiously. They had nothing to oppose—their occupation is gone. The party in power has come back to the true interests and principles of the government. Such will be the routine. Ambitious individuals create a party ; and aided by circumstances, are borne into power through popular caprice or delusion. They put the safety of the nation in jeopardy to maintain this delusion. After becoming fixed in their seats, they find it necessary to guide the car of state into the beaten road, to prevent its destruction. Those who opposed them are then tranquillized, caring little who holds the reins, if they are proceeding in the right road. Parties are amalgamated ; and aspiring politicians commence a fresh division.

From looking at the machinery of English politics, some persons have had the idea of such a regular opposition here, as exists there, without considering the radical difference between our political systems. The opposition in England has a sort of hereditary permanency. It is an union of the aristocracy and democracy against the crown. Several of the great families of that kingdom, from aristocratic pride, and disdaining to ask favours, which their rank and fortune make them careless about ; keep aloof from the government, though not always engaged in active opposition. Their immense landed property gives them the control of several boroughs, for which they

return to the house of commons their sons or connexions. There are, besides, the rotten boroughs, for which a seat is purchased, that enables a statesman, however unpopular, to continue in parliament. Two or three cities, besides, where the lower class of citizens have a vote, return representatives who commonly join this party, because they are too few to act by themselves. The party thus composed, is generally a minority of one-fifth or one-sixth of the lower house, and called the whig party ;—their foundation is in the aristocracy. They are, as Burke said of himself, when he belonged to them, *nailed to the north wall of opposition*, and maintain a regular system of attack against every measure of the ministry ; of course they are wrong the greater part of the time, and are often opposed to the opinion of the nation. At distant intervals they are forced by circumstances on the king, who never receives them cordially, or retains them long. Now what similarity is there between this opposition, and an opposition in this country ? We have no hereditary senators, who can follow their own sentiments, regardless of the feelings of the nation ; we have no boroughs which we can buy to place us in congress ; opposition therefore cannot be continued in this country to men, when measures are satisfactory. If Mr. Burke lost his election for Bristol, he might still have a seat in parliament for Old Sarum or St. Germans. When Mr. Ames lost the election in his county of Norfolk, he could no longer remain in the house of representatives. Public sentiment

cannot be made to adopt individual prejudices and animosities for a long time ; when the people generally are satisfied with the course pursued by the administration, they will elect men who will harmonize with it. *Principles, not Men*, is essentially the maxim of our political system. There is in this country no foundation for supporting a permanent party in opposition, any more than a permanent party in power.

The federal party has in fact been extinct for some time. You will excuse me for dwelling at all on so obvious a truth, because a number of demagogues here have a lively interest in maintaining the contrary, as it gives them a pretension to that exclusive favour at Washington, which they would else be without. We also see occasionally some people at the south, beating the air with the cry of federalism, probably from habit. If the majority of people in the state of Maryland do not choose to be governed by the banditti of Baltimore ; or in Massachusetts, are unwilling to displace a gallant, revolutionary patriot, against whom no shadow of reproach can be cast ; and if these people are called Federalists, it is still idle to talk of the Federal party. In some states it had never any existence at all, and in many others has long ceased from any exertion. As its extinction was announced by no formal act, it cannot be dated exactly : it may be said to have terminated when the late war commenced, though an opportunity was then furnished it for renewal, which was lost, perhaps

fortunately so ; or at least it expired with the termination of that war, and since the last presidential election, not a trace of it as a national party can be found.

This party will have justice done to it by posterity. Its services or its errors, I neither wish to magnify nor extenuate. When contemporary partialities and enmities shall be forgotten, it will be considered one of the most illustrious combinations to be found in the annals of freedom. But this is not the time to write its history ; there are too many yet alive, to borrow a figure of Mr. Grattan's, " who have sat by its cradle, and who have followed its hearse." Called into existence to administer and support that glorious constitution, which the wisdom of the states had adopted, it commenced its career with the purest feelings of patriotism. The nation held in pledge for an upright management of its affairs, the noblest reputation which modern times have known. Almost all the survivors of the revolutionary struggle, who had been eminent in the council or the field, were to be found in its ranks, and they who had achieved the independence of their country, were called upon to preserve it. Surrounded with difficulties in the outset, struggling against the undisguised ill will of one nation, and the insidious friendship of another ; they had all the departments of the public service to create, and at the same time to adjust the machinery of a new government, for a young, restless, and expanding nation. Envy, jealousy, and ambition were soon busily employed to impede their progress, misrepresent their

actions, and exaggerate their errors. The universal phrenzy of the French Revolution brought timely aid to their exertions ; men's minds became so excited by the electric state of the times, that all sober judgment was prevented, and passion decided on the results of calculation. Fortunately it withstood the torrent long enough to save the nation from the incalculable evils of an alliance with revolutionary Europe ; in whose vortex, if we had once been involved, we should, when the whirlpool had subsided, like some others, have disappeared altogether, or have risen to the surface disfigured, disgraced, and mutilated.

When this party was thrown out of power, its conduct in opposition, with very few exceptions, added new dignity to its former character. Exposed to a proscription the most universal, it received the assurance that there was no hope for personal ambition in its ranks, conveyed in the remarkable compliment, that the time did not exist when it could only be inquired respecting a candidate for office, " Is he honest ? is he capable ? is he attached to the constitution ?" Yet with true magnanimity, they struggled hard to defend, for the interests of the nation, those institutions from which they were precluded, against the short-sightedness, bigotry, and zeal of an increasing, angry, intolerant party. They strove to preserve the edifices from which they had been driven, and to keep those who were in possession, from devastating and destroying them. Their efforts were not wholly unavailing ; the army, navy, finance, judiciary, all

suffered dilapidation, and the nation enormous loss and subsequent mischief; but the foundations remained; and after a period, when some very poignant lessons had been inflicted by events, those who had exulted in the demolition, began to assist in their reconstruction.

As soon as this process commenced, their existence was superfluous; their task was completed, when the party in power ceased from the destruction of the federal government, and began to restore the original principles of action and means of security, for which this government had been adopted by the nation. Federalism was no longer a distinction, when anti-federalism was extinct, any more than republicanism is, where there are no opposers of it. Nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand in the United States, are republicans from predilection and from principle. Parties must invent new names for their watchword; we are now "all republicans, all federalists." No man will lift a finger against the constituent principles of both these parties. Dispassionate and patriotic minds in the federal ranks welcomed this state of things; which prevented the ultimate deterioration of a party, whose general career had been useful, dignified, and unpopular. The limits of this party had been constantly narrowing; its connexion and concert more and more broken; its character as a *national* party was shrinking into the confined policy of *state* politics; its Catholic principles falling into the narrowness of sectarianism. There

being no longer a communication between distant points, and no plan of action, (the results of information and compromise from various quarters,) all general views were lost, and general sympathy of course destroyed. From the substitution of local passions and prejudices for a wider system and more enlarged views, this inevitable consequence ensued—that every one out of the coteries existing here and there, was dissatisfied, disgusted and injured by the pursuit of measures which he disapproved, or tenets he denied. Great numbers were therefore rejoiced when circumstances permitted the disbanding of a force, that had been originally guided in its career by the noblest principles ; but which, having lost many of its most distinguished leaders, being extremely incomplete in many of its divisions, was now led at times by subalterns without concert ; and had fallen so much from discipline, that a mere trumpeter would sometimes undertake to sound a charge, that might produce a serious check to one of the wings, or a disgraceful defeat to the whole body.

That all the measures of this party were wise, or the opinions of all its members sound, no one will pretend ; that the one and the other generally merited this character, no one but the veriest bigot will venture to deny. Commencing the operations of a government without precedents to consult, or chart to direct, and at a time when political society was every where in a state of fermentation, it was impossible that some errors should not have taken place ; yet in

reviewing all the circumstances, it is astonishing that they were so few. These few, however, together with the foppery and extravagance of individual sentiments, sometimes produced in the wantonness of sport, and at others in a moment of irritation, were taken as the standard of their conduct. Posterity, at least, will listen to an appeal from this rule of judgment ; for to quote again from Bolingbroke, “ It would be hard indeed if parties were to be characterized, not by their common views, or the general tenour of their conduct, but by the private views imputed to some among them, or by the particular sallies into which mistake, surprise, or passion, hath sometimes betrayed the best intentioned, and even the best conducted bodies of men.”

I have spoken of the federal party generally, as a natural introduction to some remarks upon the portion of it in Massachusetts, which were the main purpose of this letter. I think, when you are acquainted with the peculiar situation, in which the present ruling party in this state, one of the chief fragments of the federal party, has been placed, that you will admit there is some apology for their recent opposition. Calumny and misrepresentation have been so widely and steadily disseminated, that the most outrageous prejudices have been excited in other parts of the country ; and many have condemned them for their violence, without any idea of the provocation they had received. Very extensive mischief, if it be mischief to create animosity between different sec-

tions of the country, has been effected by some of the journals at the south, and by other publications industriously distributed. One of the most bulky of these may be cited as a specimen. An octavo volume, compiled by an Irish bookseller in Philadelphia, has, if the title page may be believed, gone through a dozen editions: patriotism and profit are both served by the sale of the work, which is entitled, “*The Olive Branch, or faults on both sides :—*”—under this pretty name, parties are to be reconciled and differences healed, by a candid exhibition of mutual errors. What is the performance?—Passing over the dulness of a parcel of extracts from old newspapers, it has selected, with a delicacy and tenderness truly affectionate, a few prominent blunders on one side, which are narrated with the tone of a friend: but from the other, the strongest passages in remonstrances against particular measures; the violences of newspaper paragraphs, in the highest moments of irritation; the ebullitions of declaimers, whose infirmities of temper may have led them in moments of excitement into extravagance; the most inflammatory things that can be found among insulated speeches, sermons and gazettes, for a series of years, when the highest political ferment existed; all these are brought together in the spirit of an enemy, as a regular plan, a continued system of inconsistency, discord and faction. This is about as fair, as it would be to make extracts from the bills of mortality in Philadelphia, during the most fatal season of the yellow fever, and from those of Boston in a

healthy summer, and give them as a true specimen of the salubrity of the two cities.

A more malignant design could hardly have been imagined ; though a smile is excited by a certain national raciness in the title of this book, which should have been, *The torch of Alecto, or perpetual rancour and animosity*. A work, indeed, of the kind to which this makes a hypocritical pretence, might become a text book of permanent utility, to teach political morality and wisdom to future statesmen ; but it must not be the paltry impulse of party, or pecuniary thrift, that should guide its author. Who is there to undertake such a work ? Who is there with sufficient sagacity and knowledge for the task, and, at the same time, sufficient independence of his own times ? Such a man must not have any expectation either from the people or their delegates ; he must fear neither the senate nor the tribunes ; he must tell Cæsar that his ambition will lead him and his country to destruction ; he must let Antony know that his profligate habits destroy the confidence which his courage, his talents and address would inspire ; and he must—yet harder task—inform Cato that his vanity, his rudeness, and his confounding personal animosities with public principles, destroy all the advantages which his country might derive from his experience and integrity.

There is much dissimilarity in the character of those, who compose the parties that bear the same name, in different parts of the country. The causes

of this discrepancy it is not my purpose to investigate ; nor do I intend to sketch the history of the democratic party among us ; I might be a prejudiced historian. You can judge of its general character, from the individuals you have seen. Candid men on that side are always willing to admit, that their party is not composed, in this quarter, of exactly such materials as they could wish. There are able and respectable men belonging to it, and there are among them many veterans of the revolution ; because they were led to think, that they were the exclusive friends of that event. In point of numbers, it has varied at certain periods ; but those who pretend to exclusive patriotism, always find followers : it has always been considerable in this respect ; in others, its relative standing has been very different. My chief object is to show you the position of the majority here, and while I hope you will allow that there is some apology for the violence of their recent opposition, I shall speak of the course they pursued, with freedom, and I trust with impartiality.

The federalists in Massachusetts have frequently, not only by popular election, but by executive appointments, placed their opponents in places of profit, when it was an office they had before held, and in some instances appointed them to new ones ; and very rarely has any person in any civil trust, been turned out by them from political considerations. The feelings of their antagonists were not to be touched by any generous actions ; their accession to

power was like the irruption of a savage foe ; every body was proscribed ; integrity and length of service were nothing. This proscription, which only occasioned some individual distress, was of comparatively trifling importance. They attempted to destroy all freedom of opinion, and the very foundation of republicanism, by a tyrannical regulation of the banking system. The charters of the banks when about expiring, were to be refused a renewal. A new bank, with a very large capital, was incorporated, to which no man was to be admitted to become a subscriber, unless he had certain party qualifications : and to perpetuate power thus uprightly used, the ancient landmarks of the state were removed, and the surface broken into new divisions, to secure majorities ; which formed such strange portentous shapes in topography, that a new term was invented to express the operation.

One powerful source of misrepresentation, and, strange as it may seem, of delusion, is the imputation of a love of aristocracy, royalty, monarchy, and the whole train of similar hobgoblins, which are successfully used to frighten babes in the democratic nursery. Preposterous as this may appear to you, there are men full grown, who can read and write, and are allowed to vote, who believe this ; and the sly knaves who inculcate it are able, from habit, to keep their countenance while they are telling the story. Now, to an European, who knows of what stuff kings and courtiers are made, this would be indescribably ludic-

rous, and his courtly arrogance would lead him to say, with Sancho, "You cannot make a silk purse from a sow's-ear;" but to those who have never seen royalty, and its appendages, it is only absurd. The truth is, that the people of these states are all essentially, democratic republicans, in their civil and political code, their religion, education, laws respecting property, habits, prejudices, every thing. Even those who from mere wantonness and foppery talk lightly of republicanism, are all republicans in grain, and inveterately so. To make a monarchy here, would even be more impracticable than to make a republic in France;—this character indeed is not new to them;—their ancestors left England republicans two centuries ago;—their republicanism has been rendered more perfect of late years. There was remaining, down to a recent period, some tinge of distinction in ranks, which was a slight remnant of the colonial state; this has been quite obliterated. Honesty, integrity, and intelligence are the only questions asked, and you might have seen, among the members of the Massachusetts legislature, when it lately obtained such a cumbrous size, not only merchants, lawyers, physicians, and farmers, but shoemakers, carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, masons, printers, &c. I do not mean that they took the labourers from the workshops, because the wages of a legislator would not support a man, and a journeyman could not afford to serve; but men who were or had been masters of

these trades themselves, did their duty in the legislature, and discharged it reputably.

Nor, to do the federalists justice, can it be denied—whether it does them honour, is another question—that they have other marked traits of democracy. The parsimony in rewarding public services, the fear of losing popularity, the contumelious treatment of all those in power who were not placed there by themselves, the ceaseless jealousy with which the actions of all such obnoxious persons were watched ; adopting the most uncandid construction that could be put on every measure in the midst of difficulties ; condemnation for what was done, and for what was left undone : if all these will establish our claims to a full share of the democratic spirit, we have waggon-loads of vouchers.

When the national administration had been transferred—as soon as conflicting claims had been settled—a general proscription was carried into effect ; all the old servants of the public were turned out, to reward those who had laboured so assiduously for their places. Neither revolutionary services, upright conduct, and faithful discharge of trust, nor the negative praise of inoffensiveness, much less the distress it might occasion the incumbent, were to be regarded. A general clearing was the consequence, so that only one or two standards remained. Indeed, at the moment, I only recollect one, the veteran General Lincoln, one of those fine specimens of calm intrepidity ; courtesy, simplicity and integrity, that ennoble the

military career, and form its *beau ideal*. You will excuse my throwing this poor flower in passing, on his grave over which his country has not yet found time to erect a monument.

The federalists, it is well known, grumbled and railed most stoutly at this process; but from its very nature it was soon completed; the new officers did their duty, and the murmurs gradually died away. They submitted so completely to this system, that they entirely gave up all ideas of being employed in the public service; and no claim on account of services rendered, of talents or peculiar fitness for office, would have been considered worth urging in favour of any one belonging to this party, however moderate he might be in his political character. At least nine-tenths of those, whose talents or education made them suitable for any kind, even the humblest, of public employments, thus found themselves rigidly excluded in favour of the small minority that was left.

This would at last have been considered a matter of course, and opposition would have in time wholly subsided, if the administration at Washington had not thought it necessary, and doubtless for a period it was so; to use their constant efforts to place their partisans, already basking in the sunshine of national favour, in the control of the state governments; and we have seen that their conduct in them was such, as to excite the opposition of every man who felt any interest in the dignity or prosperity of these governments. The federalists, therefore, in this and the

bordering states, were forced, from the most obvious principles of self-preservation, to continue an opposition, not so much to the federal government, as to a faction within themselves, enjoying the protection of that government; without which it would have been powerless and insignificant.

Thus they went on, struggling annually to maintain their share in the state administrations, and to prevent, as they believed, the subversion of that system of local policy relating to the judiciary, the support of education, religion, and various public institutions to which they were attached. These fears were doubtless excessive as to the ultimate degree of mischief that would have been done, because the good sense of the citizens, deluded as they might be for a time, would not keep any party long enough in power to consummate the work: but that they were not wholly groundless, the open threats and overt acts of this party had given full assurance. This was the situation of things between the federalists in these states and the administration, down to the commencement of the late war.

This was a moment when, if conciliation had been possible, it would have been followed with the most glorious consequences. Whether one, or both sides, or neither, were to blame for its not taking place, I do not pretend to decide, but their common country was the victim. There was one transaction at this period, which has left an indelible stain on its authors. One of the most wretched and insignificant of all in-

triguers, worthily seconded by a base, foreign swindler, went to Washington, and there revealed certain portentous secrets to the president. While many an honest claimant was pining in delay of justice by a scrupulous treasury ; while many an important fortress was without a gun for its defence, these glorious secrets were eagerly bought for fifty thousand dollars. As they contained only some silly, abortive intrigues of an English colonial governor, they seemed of little value in the list of grievances for a declaration of war, where so many very substantial ones existed ; and as the most malignant interpretation could implicate no citizen with connivance, if it had been thought worth while to make use of them against the enemy, a fine opportunity was offered for a magnanimous exoneration of our own citizens, from all suspicion of yielding to these sinister intrigues. What was the course pursued ?—I will not trust myself to characterize it ; public sentiment has pronounced on the subject ; but the impolicy was flagrant, that attempted to stigmatize with infamy all the leading men in a powerful section of the country, on the eve of a war, which demanded for its successful termination, the whole energy of a united nation. Is there any person who can wonder that men who had a spark of honour or integrity remaining, should hurl defiance at an administration, which sought to blast them with insinuations of the most despicable treason ?

When the war commenced, numerous appointments were to be made ; many of these were of a descrip-

tion to need a high, elevated, gallant feeling, and afforded another opening for reconciliation, by calling on all classes for the public defence. Was there any instance, in this part of the country, where a man's party qualifications were disregarded? Could any man obtain leave to shed his blood for his country, even if his father had done so before him, unless he carried a recommendation from those, who had so fatally persuaded the administration to abandon this important section of the Union to their control? In other states there were some very notorious federalists who received military appointments, but here an inveterate hostility doomed them to inaction. If the case were reversed, do you think that your friends and neighbours would tamely endure this most galling kind of outlawry?

I trust to your forbearance for one word more of reproach against your friends. The most extensive mischief has resulted, from the administration so pertinaciously making a privileged pet of the democratic party among us, which in this case, as in most others of perverse fondness, had neither the graces of mind nor body to excuse the caprice. The whole interior management in this quarter during the war, left the majority of the state in some doubt, whether their destruction, or that of the enemy, was the favourite object. Certain it is, that much more serious injury might have been done to the latter, if hatred against the former had been less active, or only been postponed. Essential measures were defeated through

the desire to mortify and degrade those, who held the military and civil command of the state. It would be too repulsive a task to go into details, but such was the fact. Whenever the situation in which the government of Massachusetts was unfortunately placed, shall be fairly and fully investigated, men of honourable feelings and impartial minds, though they may be of opposite political sentiments, will allow that there was much excuse for the heated and disastrous opposition, the state was almost obliged to sustain. Its services, means, exertions, were all engaged in the public defence, and might have been rendered much more effective, if a course had not been pursued, which was useless for every purpose, but to gratify the malignant feelings of a local faction.

Having thus mentioned to you a few circumstances, to show how the ruling party here were forced, driven, goaded into a continued opposition to the national government; which was, notwithstanding, founded on considerations of local policy, and directed more against a domestic faction among themselves, than against the general administration; I trust the statement, which might have been enlarged with many emphatic details, will have some weight in your mind, to excuse the violence of that opposition; on which I now proceed to comment with the same freedom, that I have spoken of the injurious policy exercised towards it. In all these remarks, I consider the administration and the opposition of that period

as both extinct ; and that we are reviewing their conduct as an affair of history—though of history too recent, it must be owned, to expect perfect impartiality.

I have before remarked, that the commencement of the late war was a moment when the federal party might have been renewed—that the opportunity was lost, and perhaps fortunately. Though a war with one of the great belligerent powers had seemed inevitable for years, it was declared at last rashly, because very slight preparation had been made, and the representatives who declared it, refused to lay taxes for its support, and hurried home to take care of their popularity. Almost destitute of the first means even for defensive, there could not be any preparation for offensive, warfare, that merited the name. With undisciplined, new levies, very few of whose officers had seen service ; without any one department being organized, or any well arranged plan of a campaign, our operations commenced—defeat in the first instance was inevitable ;—the miserable state of the finances, and the little confidence felt by the moneyed interest in their management, soon accumulated the most serious difficulties. We had, besides, been so long at peace, there was something so resounding and imposing in the great military and naval conflicts, which had taken place in this era ;—we had been so long bullied and injured by the rival powers, that many individuals distrusted our prowess, and believed that our enterprise was suited only to peaceful pur-

suits, and that we should be very unapt scholars in martial science. If then the federalists, when the war broke out, had established a correspondence with each other, for a uniform plan of proceeding ; if they had continued to denounce the war, not for its wickedness, but for its rashness and impolicy ; had they given the government the means they asked to carry it on effectively, and confined themselves to legitimate measures of opposition ; to pointing out the mismanagement, the improvidence, which menaced the country with ruin, they would have acquired a prodigious increase of strength, and perhaps might have come again into power. But with marvellous magnanimity, as regarded party policy, they set themselves to oppose the current of national feeling, not the conduct of the administration ; they clamoured against the war itself, not the mismanagement of it, and they were so much in dread of the ambition of the cabinet at Washington, that they did every thing in their power to thwart the prosecution of the war ; rather trusting for a peace to the forbearance of an arrogant, grasping, irritated, foreign power, than to an administration that had been driven into it, and were most anxious to get out of the difficulty. By this course, which paralyzed some important operations, they alarmed many moderate men, who however they may happen to vote, care more for their country than their party ; and a very large number of others were disgusted and driven away, by the anti-national tone, which was so foolishly and so frequently adopted.

There was no concert between different parts of the country ; the principles that were broached here, together with the tone of our newspapers and resolutions, destroyed all sympathy in the breasts of federalists in other states. Thus the occasion for renovating the federal party was lost, and the fragment of it which subsisted in the eastern section of the Union, occupied itself with more passion than foresight in opposing the national feelings ; and struggling against the intrigues of a domestic faction, that was making use of the war to get the control of the state governments ; and although the pressure of the war was very severe upon this quarter, this was perhaps the most dreaded of all its calamities.

You may, perhaps, think it inconsistent in me to suggest, that it was fortunate, that the occasion for restoring the federal party was lost ;—you will therefore excuse a few words in explanation. So many distinguished leaders of the party were dead ; it had so entirely run out in many of the states, and such a load of obloquy had been unjustly heaped upon it, that even if it had been restored to power, the prejudices in many parts of the Union were so strong, that it could never have acted usefully for the nation. It was much better, that the party which had displaced it, and which had the popular prejudice in its favour, should gradually assume its principles, which were the original principles of our government. You will perceive my meaning without further illustration ; but one point is too striking to be omitted. One of the

great measures of the federal administration, one of the vital supports of this union at home and abroad, is the navy ;—you know what a mass of jealousy and hatred was engendered against it ; how many visionary unfounded statements were made, both in speeches and writings ; how resolutely it was doomed to destruction. The late war, one of the most fortunate, both in a foreign and domestic view, that any nation ever waged ; which I believe to have been the most redeeming and salutary in its consequences to this nation—if it had done no other good, would have been of incalculable value, in showing the indispensable importance of this branch of defence, and the excellent materials we possess for it. Probably there is no subject on which the opinion of the public is now so unanimous ; its increase and prosperity are favourite objects with the administration and with the people, and there is no one to dissent ;—but in the hands of the federal party, suspicion would have watched every step, and its growth and efficiency would have been greatly retarded by opposition.

During a long course of party animosity and aspersion, it had grown to be a matter of belief, that the administration, in the management of our foreign relations, were entirely under the influence of France ; the main proofs of which were brought from their avowed partiality and violent sympathy for the French Revolution, long after many who hailed its commencement with the most generous emotions were disgusted with the course it took, and filled with

too just apprehensions of its wretched termination. This belief, naturally enough, produced a feeling in favour of the rival of France, more particularly, when the existence of that rival seemed to be in the most imminent danger, and the power of France menaced the civilized world with subjection to military tyranny. A number of writers for a series of years, had dwelt on the danger to which we were ultimately exposed, by the prophesied supremacy of France.* Fear of that power, rather than love of England,

* The writings of Fisher Ames, one of the most accomplished orators that the eastern states have produced, had a decisive influence in this way. They gave a tone to almost all our newspaper essays for a long time. Mr. Ames had surrendered his mind to a theory, and, as men of genius are prone to do, pursued it in all its ramifications, till judgment was out of sight. There was a settled systematic conviction in his mind, of an inevitable, intrinsic principle of rapid deterioration in our institutions ; and this produced a train of melancholy, gloomy forebodings, which, couched as they were in the most animated style, made a lasting impression. Having taken the deepest interest in public affairs at the period, when efforts were made to involve our career with that of revolutionary France ; feeling how certain and perhaps irretrievable would have been the evils of such an union ; having watched the crisis with an anxiety amounting almost to mental agony, and having had a very considerable share, by his persuasive eloquence, in preventing it ; the feelings that were excited at the time imbued all his ideas, and led him into the great error of blending the systems of the French republic and our confederation together, though no two political systems could be more fundamentally different. With respect to the former, he was always right, and sometimes prophetically so ; and with regard to the latter, almost invariably wrong. In his politics, there was a tincture of prejudice, infused by early associations with some of his connexions, who had been opposed to the revolution. As a public man, there was nothing coarse in his ambition, nothing sordid in his views ; but he had too much genius and too little worldliness, to make a very successful statesman. In private life he was the delight of his friends ; the amenity of his manners, the simplicity and integrity of his heart, the perennial, sparkling brilliancy of his mind, made his society a constant source of interest. In the frankness and courtesy of his intercourse, in the plainness and moderation of all his habits, in his ardent love of liberty, he was a practical republican.

deeply pervaded our political feelings ; and the evils of war were rendered insupportably galling, when they were supposed to be in any degree owing to the intrigues of a foreign despotism. You may think this illiberality disgraceful, until you recollect the miserable imputation so lavishly cast by the other side, of "*British gold* ;" and then regret the common degradation of supposing our leading statesmen to be corrupt ; an idea which arose from the mutual violence of party. The disgraceful habit of making such charges, grew out of the phrensy that was spread over the world by the French Revolution. We may hope that, for the future, we shall respect ourselves too highly, to endure the license of similar accusations.

The anti-national tone which was so frequently heard here, was generated by the arrogance and bigotry of party. Though it was well calculated to disgust many persons, whose support would have been most useful, as well as to give some colour to the charge of settled disaffection ; more meaning was attached to it elsewhere, than it really possessed. Many who abused the conduct of the administration, till the cause of their country was involved in the disrespect, were led to it by the mere ill-temper of party, and much of this flippancy was stimulated by the wish to vex those, who under the magic of certain assumed names, were enjoying all the favour of government ; and having cut off the majority from the pursuits of peace, deprived them of

their share of the advantages to be derived from war, and condemned them to a mortifying and injurious inaction. As to the individuals who have real tory sympathies, the class is very small indeed, and obviously a mortuary one. Probably we shall not have an entirely unprejudiced feeling towards England, while there is any man among us, who is older than the nation. A few years more will remove the remains of that generation, who were once subject to a foreign sovereign, and who, often unaware of it, have some reference in all their feelings to that period, and to the struggle which terminated in our independence. Those of us who have been born since that event, and have never known any other government than this of our choice, can hardly realize the lingering influence of those prejudices, which were engendered by the animosities and predilections of our colonial existence. Most of those who were decided tories left the country, and long and bitterly have some of them lamented the mistake. Of those who yet remain among us, the vestiges of former times, the number I suspect is much smaller, than even the most liberal minds would be apt to suppose. In most of these cases, it is the result of a vague prejudice, counteracted by local habits and attachments, and without influence. A few years must destroy every trace of it; time has thinned the ranks of the revolutionary generation, and the remaining few of those gallant spirits who achieved our independence, and of the timid minds that opposed it, must soon be gathered to the bones of their fathers.

The false ground, not only in a national, but in a party view, occupied by the federalists in the eastern states, was becoming more and more disadvantageous, exposing them inevitably to ultimate defeat. By the kind of opposition they had given to the war, public opinion was put into a course, which led, by a gradual progress, to the absurdity and mischief of an open resistance, or separation; and before it had come to this, the party would have been completely dissolved. This was shown in the abortive Hartford convention. The leaders of the party, by the line which had been followed, were driven into this unfortunate measure; for in this case, as in many others, those who were supposed to lead, because they were placed in advance, were in reality driven. The ordinary modes of opposition to the administration in order to terminate the war, not having been resorted to originally, they who had so unadvisedly marked out a different route, were called upon, as the pressure of suffering became greater, to relieve it by open resistance if necessary. To temporize and parry this violence of discontent, was all that could be done. The report of that convention showed no want of national feeling, and deprecated the idea of disunion. That they were sincere in these feelings, must indeed be admitted by every one, unless you will deny to individuals of acknowledged ability and long experience, a deficiency of common sense, and even ordinary sagacity. For how could

men who were not deficient in these, with no other footing than the shifting sand bank of party, which the current of public feeling was continually washing away, and which we have since seen, has completely submerged those who represented what was considered the most solid and steady of these states; I ask, how such men could expect to take any measures that would lead to a dissolution of the Union, or to a civil war; at the first expectation of which they would have been abandoned by their followers almost *en masse*, and when they would have been the first, if not the only victims? These transactions furnished a memorable lesson, into what insuperable difficulties a wrong system will conduct men of even the greatest capacity; neutralizing all their powers, causing a certain loss of popularity, and subjecting them to the suspicion of sinister designs, at the very time they are honestly labouring to avoid great calamities.

The false direction taken at the commencement of the war, was partly owing to the federalists having given, for a long period, an almost exclusive attention to the concerns of their own particular state. In a free country the minority get the light only by reflection; they are never directly shone upon, and their views of public affairs become confined and broken. A seat in the national legislature was to them a matter of indifference, when they had lost all influence over measures, when they were proscribed as to every branch of public service, and when their employment verged more and more

towards a captious and ineffectual opposition. They became satisfied if they could maintain themselves in their state legislatures ; with an occasional notice of the affairs of the nation, contained in the answer to a governor's speech, or in some high sounding, angry, inane " resolutions." However important these legislatures may be to the welfare of the people, and no one can doubt that they are of the highest importance, not merely to local interests, but to our existence as a free nation ; there is still a subordinate interest in their deliberations, and the subjects of them are confined within narrow limits. Their management too is greatly inferior to the practice of Congress, both in dignity, and security against surprise in the passing of acts. It is hardly possible to get a bill through in congress surreptitiously ; it is almost impossible to prevent its being done occasionally in the state legislatures, and sometimes from the purest intentions towards the public service. Though the state legislature is the common school of preparation for congress, it may be doubted whether it is a useful one, and more than doubted, if the apprenticeship be a long one. The delegate is prone to make the mistake of the young attorney in Rhode Island, who on being chosen into its legislature, talked about, " being engaged in public life." The topics for discussion are so restricted, that the mind accommodates itself to small objects. The regulation of a county court, the location of a road, or the care of our favourite alewife, are the chief concerns to occupy attention.

Sometimes indeed a mighty genius arises, who in a wide scope of reform, attempts to secure the applause of his constituents with a grand scheme of retrenchment ; which by cutting down the enormous salaries of the half dozen clerks who have grown gray in the public service, may save to a state with 800,000 inhabitants, twelve, or even fourteen hundred dollars a year ! Another may propose to get rid of the shocking scandal which arises in a Christian country, from using the present, pagan names of the months and days, so well known to be of heathenish derivation. Such schemes, to be sure, do not always succeed, but they show the dangerous ambition which sometimes lurks in our legislatures.

Connecticut affords an example of this narrowing influence of local policy. There is no state where the common and many of the higher branches of education are more easily obtained ; there is none where instruction is more generally diffused. No one will deny, that its inhabitants possess both wit and acuteness. Yet among all their able, public men, there is hardly one, with the exception of those who have been transplanted, who has shown a mind capable of extensive range, or that was not bigoted to, or fettered by local considerations. This might be in some degree owing to the want of a large town in the state, where through the intercourse and collision of cultivated minds, brought together from a distance, a system of generalizing might be produced, on the ruins of small prejudices

and diminutive apprehensions. Their government vibrated between two villages, and a man could not be trusted as a delegate for more than six months. There was a sort of habitual, pervading police, made up of Calvinistic inquisition and village scrutiny, that required a very deleterious subserviency from all candidates for public life. A very conceited intolerance held opinion in subjection. Superior minds were obliged to cower to inferior ones, till they lost the power of rising to, and sustaining an elevation, whence they could discern the bearing and relations of distant objects. We have done better in Massachusetts, and may boast of having produced some accomplished and powerful statesmen. This may have been owing in part to our having a capital, the seat of the state government, and which is the natural centre, not of its own state alone, but of the neighbouring territories. A very active and extensive foreign commerce has made it a mart where much information is collected, and where many strangers resort. A greater variety of pursuit has enlarged the sphere of observation, and diminished the influence of local prejudice. The University in its vicinity has fostered the taste for literature and science, and it has always possessed a more numerous class of cultivated society, than cities of the same, or even much greater size. These circumstances, among others, have tended to preserve us from that provincial atmosphere, under which every thing, save plants of common growth, is blighted or dwindles.

It will be obvious to you, that the position of parties here, being wholly nominal, and entirely disconnected with any general system, must speedily change, and be differently compounded and designated. The deepest apathy prevails in regard to all national measures; the debates of congress are hardly more known than those of the British parliament: the utmost extent of solicitude goes to preserve a preponderance in certain local elections. The federalists no longer pretend any opposition to the national administration; their appellation has therefore lost all former party meaning. If it had not, it would be perfectly absurd to suppose that one column could remain, neither supporting nor supported, when all the others had been thrown down, and their materials combined anew. The democratic party are no longer opposed to the federal government, since it is administered by their friends. The political discord in Massachusetts will subside in one of two ways. If the majority maintains a resolute, local intolerance, while it demands a catholic spirit in the national administration, it will be destroyed by the open defection of those who may wish to make a merit by so doing, or by the quiet secession of others, who are not fond of strife at any time, and disgusted with its continuance, when it is founded on petty personalities or senseless hatred, and is no longer necessary on principle. But if this majority, acting in a spirit of magnanimous policy, selects frankly some of its opponents, places a full proportion of them in the various

municipal and civil offices, it will bring about a reconciliation that will put an end to all opposition ; —to the semblance of it against the general government, from one party, and to the reality of it, against the state, from another ; and the present lists of proscription will be finally closed. Parties will thus be broken up ; they will indeed soon form anew ; it is necessary for the preservation of freedom that they should exist ; but it is equally important, that they should not exist too long in the same form, lest they become so deep rooted and grow to such a height, as to overshadow the constitution.

I have now terminated this very ungrateful discussion ; and have endeavoured to exhibit some of the errors on both sides, in the late exasperated contention of parties, which has been protracted for so many years. My object in part was to show you, that the conduct of those who were opposed to the late war, and which excited so much surprise and odium in other states, was susceptible of some palliation. The course that was pursued offered the most irritating provocation to a majority in this section of the Union ; and if that majority went beyond the bounds of temper and discretion in meeting it, a feeling of magnanimity should dispose every one, when the conflict is over, and the passions have cooled, to a mutual oblivion. Let me refresh myself after the irksome task of reviewing these transient bickerings, these evanescent quarrels, with a few reflections on the noble condition and mag-

nificent prospects of our common country. In the contemplation of these all party feelings will be forgotten.

In considering the prosperity of the United States, and its daily, hourly extension, it is difficult to keep within the limits of sober calculation. Its results begin to develope themselves so rapidly, that we are easily led away from facts and figures, into vague though vivid reveries upon the future amount of the population, and the vast resources that will be within its command. But in examining the political and civil institutions, which regulate this fortunate country, whatever pride we may feel from their liberality and wisdom, we can discuss them with more precision and calmness. This letter would swell into a volume with only a superficial examination of these subjects; but you will be patient under a page or two more, containing a few allusions to them.

While reasoning upon our government, it is necessary to discard many impressions that have been made by opinions and theories, derived from history, which presents an identity of names and no similarity of circumstances; from the rise and fall of states which existed on different principles; from republics that bore no resemblance to ours. There is, in truth, nothing in the annals of the world like our federal republic, composed of a number of representative democracies, differing in some minute circumstances for local convenience, yet having the same basis of civil and political rights and duties.

All these bodies move within certain spheres, and the checks against any deviation from their orbit are innumerable, not only within themselves, but from the others. In this political orrery every thing is so calculated, that when a new star comes in sight, it is immediately subjected to the same influence, and tends to increase the harmony and strength of the whole. Many able men have had their fears about the durability of our system, not, as vulgar malice would insinuate from enmity to it, but from very strong attachment and excessive fears in consequence. In arguments on this subject, when other reasons fail, we are commonly suffocated with some such truisms as these,—human nature is ever the same; men will always be governed by their passions, &c. Yet after having recovered our breath, let us ask for a parallel case; show us one example of a republic like ours having failed, or having ever existed at all. How idle it is to talk of the Grecian or Roman republics; in what did they resemble our system? The miniature community of San Marino; the Dutch republic, composed of a stadtholder, an hereditary and a moneyed aristocracy, or “a free, imperial Hanseatic city,” made up of commission merchants, brokers, and their appendages, and who could “cover their territory with their shirts,” might as well be brought forward. The exterior form of ancient republics was imposing, but the grand improvement of modern political science—representation—which has been

brought to such high perfection in this country ; which is felt not only in the great veins and arteries, but exhibited in the very capillaries of the state, was most imperfectly known ; and partially practiced. The moderns have never yet equalled the Apollo or the Venus ; yet notwithstanding the excellence of those ideal forms, the ancients were ignorant of the circulation of the blood : and there is not a greater difference in the degree of science discovered in the exquisite, superficial beauty of a statue, by the hand of Phidias ; or in one of those wonderful anatomical statues from the school of Florence, than there is between the mechanism and polity of the Grecian and American states.

The advanced state of the representative system, and its extensive application here, which some civilians, reasoning on the example of nations under different circumstances, have considered a principle of weakness and ultimate mischief, are in reality the great basis of our national strength and security. There is no nation that can boast of similar advantages ; even in England, where the system is perhaps best understood, how broken, irregular, and unequal it is in its organization, and in its exercise, how subject to the foulest abuses ! A parliamentary election in that country, more nearly resembles the license of the *saturnalia*, than the solemn act of freemen, conferring the most precious of all authority. In this country every thing is delegated ; the practice of representation extends its ramifications through every part of society. The frequency and

universality of election, give a facility and habit of judging to the electors, who, though commonly subjected to the dictates of party, are not imperiously so, and without their own consent. Even here it is the same principle that governs; the choice with whom to act is always open. This principle is every where in action, from villages to cities, counties, states, up to the confederation; from the meanest village officer up to the President of the United States, almost every species of authority is the result of election. The principle is varied in its action, according to regular fixed rules, and is thus prevented from becoming unwieldy. The infinite checks against the abuse of power, the unrestricted opening for talent, and the precedence accorded to it; the publicity of all transactions, the wide diffusion of intelligence, and the inevitable influence of public sentiment; render this matured scheme of representation, the main support of our liberty, happiness and strength.

One of the objections that was made to the durability of our republic, was the very trite one, that it was not fit for a country of such extent, and that only a small territory could endure a republican form. In that masterly commentary on our constitution, *The Federalist*, it was suggested, with as much sagacity as originality, that this idea was erroneous; that where a small republic had existed, it was owing more to external circumstances, than to its intrinsic strength, and that an extensive country was better suited to maintain a re-

public, than a small one. Time has already developed the soundness of this opinion, and few now can doubt, that the extent of our country is one great cause of security for its free government; that the accessions which have been made to the confederation have added to its strength, and that its vigour and adhesiveness must continue for a long time to increase.

One powerful security of our republic is, its being a confederation, the extent of which renders a consolidation impossible: this magnificent organization is alone sufficient to render its authors illustrious. Compare it with any ancient or modern confederations; with the Peloponnesian league, the cantons of Switzerland, or the federal system of Germany, and how infinitely superior is its constitution. The several states, exercising a sovereignty for all their immediate and intimate concerns, save the general government from all trouble and responsibility about their local interests; from the danger of being corrupted by having an excess of patronage, and the dissatisfaction and broils that would be created in its distribution; while the citizen is guaranteed against the numerous delays or injudicious measures that would be incident to a distant exercise of authority. The manner in which these states are represented in congress, varying in form, yet perfectly harmonizing in spirit, is another source of security. The innumerable checks that are given by the sovereignty of the states, against the encroachments of ambition in the

general government, are certain in their operation. An arrogant, ambitious cabinet might disregard a minority in the capitol, but if their designs were dangerous, this minority would find a triumphant support in the state governments. Yet how absurd and hopeless is an open resistance in any of these state governments to the federal government; the moment an attempt is made, it is checked in its turn by the minority within itself; which minority, if resistance be persevered in, soon terminates it, by becoming the majority. The state and general governments thus mutually assure each other, by forming alternately a point of support against a designing or mistaken policy.

This has been remarkably shown in the difficulty of altering the constitution, which though it may receive amendments, can only do so from the decided sentiments of a large majority of the nation. The process necessary for this purpose, is replete with safety to the object of it. Many of the states have tried their hand at this game, or rather certain individuals, feeling a call to be reformers, have stimulated their legislatures to make the attempt; which is calmly, and almost as a matter of course, extinguished by the others.

That the union of the states has increased in strength as it has grown older, there can be no doubt; and that the accession of new states, for the present at least, has a tendency to confirm it, seems equally certain. When General Hamilton was asked to mention a supposable case, where the

Union would be in danger, he gave as an answer ; that supposing a combination between Massachusetts and Virginia, to oppose any particular measures, should take place, it would certainly create very serious embarrassment, if it did not destroy the Union. This was twenty years ago. Admitting the same case to happen now, the mischief doubtless would be great, but the ultimate danger is certainly lessened. The other states have acquired greater strength, and the relative importance of these two is diminished, and diminishing every day, though both are increasing in wealth and population. They are minds of small calibre, which boast now of belonging to Virginia or to Massachusetts ; these narrow, local, factious pretensions, are abashed ; they are replaced by the more noble, generous claim, to the national appellation of an American. Indeed the mutual advantages of the Union are so continually developing, and the independence of the states is so secure against the danger of consolidation, that nothing short of an universal phrenzy could dissolve the republic. One of the events, and indeed the only one now talked of, which would produce that misfortune, would be the change of the seat of government, and keeping it in a moveable state. If this course of policy should be pursued, an establishment of waggons would then be the only means of adapting it to a shifting location, answerable to the imaginary centre of the nation, whose circle is continually spreading with the flood of emigration.

But it is said, the western states are rapidly increasing in population, and after a second or third additional census, they will have the majority of numbers, and will carry the seat of government on the other side of the mountains. This would be such a dangerous evil to the Atlantic states, that a division might indeed be the consequence. Now putting out of the question the influence of all reason and policy in the case; that it is of little consequence to the interior states to have the seat of government among them, because the objects of the federal government are almost wholly external; that there is no danger to be guarded against, except from the east; and that if this government were not within reach of the sea-coast, its foreign relations would meet with so much delay, and its distance from the scene of operations, where any enemy could appear, would be so great, that the Atlantic states might be visited with the most serious calamities before it could interpose; putting all considerations of this nature out of the question, and there are many unanswerable ones that are obvious, let us see what other impediments may arise to such a change.

In the first place, the communication between the western and Atlantic states is every day becoming easier. Before this contemplated majority is attained, there will be another state on the Gulf of Mexico, between the Sabine and the Colorado; another on the Red River, one on the Arkansas, on the Osage, the Kanes and the Platte, besides two or three on

the Missouri, and one in the North West Territory. Now where is the new seat of government to be? Not at Chillicothe, which used to be talked of when the western settlements were in their infancy; that is already quite out of sight. It is difficult to say where it would be, probably on the Osage, or the Kanes. But in the mean time the state of Ohio will have become opposed to the measure. It is easier for them to go to Washington, if they cannot have it at Chillicothe: Michigan has the same feeling: Kentucky and Tennessee are nearer home at Washington than to go down their rivers and up the Missouri. Besides, the unanimity now prevailing in the western states cannot last; if they continue free, they will be split into parties, which would have a bearing on this question, and perhaps this very question itself might destroy this unanimity. Those states also, by the time this question is called, up, will have got rid of their giddiness, and reached a degree of maturity, that will cause them to act on questions of great national moment, with an enlarged, sober, dignified policy; and not be governed by a spirit of rash, heedless vapouring, the vulgar consequences of sudden growth and new-made fortune. This is all speculation; but you will listen with complacency to any thing that can be said, against even the prospect of so great an evil as separation, which seems to be more improbable every day. That it will never take place I do not mean to assert, but I believe most confidently that it is very distant. When the

future *Pacific* states come to be represented in congress, and a member cannot travel to his home and back in the interval of the sessions, it may be difficult to get over the inconvenience ; but this is an affair for posterity. We can only endeavour to leave for their use such regulations, such motives for attachment, and such experience, as may assist them in their deliberations.

When to our civil and political advantages, we add the benefits we owe to our extensive limits, that our country comprises every climate, from that in which Alpine plants may be found on the tide water, to one which ripens the sugar cane ; that all the productions between these extremes may be cultivated freely and exchanged without restriction, and that the industry of man, spread over such a large portion of the earth, will at no distant period supply every want : while this industry existing under one banner, fettered by no custom-house impediments or restrictions, is enabled, by every where directing its efforts after the most beneficial manner, to throw the vast capabilities of this immense territory into one common stock, how incalculable the amount of prosperity that will be created ! When we consider that enterprise is unbounded, and constantly excited by successful examples, that property is secure, the person protected, and opinion without arbitrary control ; that the restless may go when and where they will, and every man in the pursuit of fame, fortune or amusement, may range unquestioned throughout

these wide domains ; what a prospective accumulation of glory, happiness and power is here displayed !

Much of this is owing to local position, but it would be false modesty to deny, that much of it is owing to ourselves, to the patriotism, integrity, ability and moderation of our public men, and to the intelligence and morality of our citizens at large. Our character and condition attract daily, more and more of the attention of the world. The late war was productive of inestimable benefit in this way ; it made us known and respected by other nations. Our youth and our distance had made us little regarded, often misrepresented, and very falsely appreciated. Dragged into war at the end of a long quarrel, which had desolated every nation in Europe, and given military glory an unfortunate superiority over all others, we soon gave decisive proofs, that peace had not made us timid, nor liberty ungovernable. The vulgar glory which arises from gallantry and skill in war, we showed ourselves capable of attaining, not by an equivocal struggle with a weak nation, but in a hardy conflict with the strongest. Foreigners who see us abroad, or visit us at home, estimate us more justly, since recent events have dissipated so many prejudices.* The old routine of calumny begins to be discontinued, and though some exaggeration may grow out of the re-action, we shall hereafter be better understood. Enlightened strangers see our country in a favourable, but a true light, and are exempt from the bias which is given

by party passions. One of this class, who after having reigned for some years as a sovereign, over some of the fairest portions of Europe ; and now resides in this country with philosophic contentment, and all the simplicity of a private gentleman, remarked to me in conversation ; “ This is a happy nation, “ and in the most fortunate circumstances : some persons think you have not government enough ; “ others, that you have too much ; they are both “ wrong ; every thing is as it should be, and it is “ the happiest country in the world for persons like “ me, who neither wish to command, nor to obey.”

It is natural that the citizens of such a nation should exult in their national character. It is impossible that men born and educated in a country, governed on more elevated principles than any other ; under a system which supposes a higher degree of virtue and intelligence in its inhabitants ; where every man may enjoy not only civil liberty, but the highest political immunities,—where there is no titular inferiority, and no exclusive privileges ; where talent and virtue are the only honourable distinctions, and open the way to the highest magistracy, it is impossible such men should not be proud, and glory in the character of republicans. The vulgar and the insolent will be apt to show this offensively to other nations ; but the man of education, who knows how to reconcile the esteem of others with self respect, while careful not to offend foreigners with arrogance or vanity, and allowing them all the advantages resulting from a

high degree of polished refinement, and the establishment of many time-honoured institutions, will still secretly feel, that his national condition is the noblest in the world.

LETTER III.

RELIGION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THOUGH I could not entirely clear your brow from that expression of reproachful anxiety, which would come over it, when the situation of Religion here was a subject of our conversation; yet you were willing to smile at the ludicrous denunciations of some of your fellow citizens, and of others farther south, against the heretical sects in this quarter, while they themselves never passed the threshold of any church. Even the orthodox among us, if they are not partisans, think their friends in other states, who hold the same opinions with themselves, a little bigoted in their judgment of our Unitarians. It is indeed difficult to feel any prejudice against the theory of people, whose practice embraces every virtue; and we perhaps

become insensible to the danger of certain tenets in their ultimate consequences, by the constant exhibition of the most benevolent virtues in their present followers. Many of these who go to places of public worship, from motives not very dissimilar to those of the lady in your city, who took a pew in the Unitarian chapel; "because it was a nice, cool place, to carry the children," are dangerous examples of strict morality and active virtue, connected with very unsound and limited notions of abstract doctrine. In attempting to give you some account of the present state of religion in Massachusetts, you must recollect that I am no theologian, and that I offer you only a superficial sketch, unbiassed by any sectarian prejudice.

The consideration of the state of religion here is attended with peculiar interest, since the first colonists, driven by persecution to seek a shelter for their principles, crossed the ocean to maintain them, and laid the foundations of this state, as a religious commonwealth. They acted in the spirit, and considered themselves as living under the sway, of a theocracy; and this was accompanied with the highest degree of zeal and intolerance in conduct, purity of manners, austerity in discipline, and the severest tenets of faith. They were rigid Calvinists in belief; puritans in regard to all the amusements of the world; obstinate dissenters from all ceremonies in worship; jealous independents of all ecclesiastical government, and most devout abhorers of every other sect. The cruel character and

appalling ferocity of this religious creed, never were better justified and strengthened by circumstances. Men might naturally believe in a system, which transformed that Deity, who is the fountain of mercy and God of all grace, into a being of mysterious vengeance and cruelty; when they found themselves, though living in the strictest morality and devoted to religion, called upon to endure the greatest sufferings, exposed to an untried climate and howling wilderness, the coil of the rattlesnake at their heels, and the tomahawk of the savage at their heads.

It was not a sudden impulse, but a long course of preparation, that drove them to cross the Atlantic; the process was gradual that hardened their feelings to every thing but their religious attachments, and made them prefer those to every other consideration. They were as ready to suffer martyrdom as to inflict it; the time indeed had gone by when the refractory were condemned to the flames in this world. But martyrdom, according to the fashion of the day—proscription, imprisonment and exile—they first suffered themselves, and then inflicted on others; they were the victims of intolerance and ecclesiastical tyranny; and the moment it was in their power exercised both. Stimulated as they believed by the love of God in both cases, they endured, and they made others endure from the closest convictions of conscience; having sacrificed fortune, friends and country, in support of their principles, any permission to differ would have been considered

a criminal levity and inconsistency. Persecution was to them a lesson, not of charity, but of perseverance, and the system they adopted was as rigid and exclusive, as that from which they had fled.

Stern and zealous as they were, they could not be wholly insensible to the reflections that were cast upon them, for thus following a system of oppression in matters of religion, against which in others they complained so justly. It was answered in excuse, that the case was materially different ; that they had been driven from their home for want of conformity, and had fled to this wilderness to enjoy their freedom ; that they had purchased the soil, and established a community for the express purpose of worshipping God in simplicity and truth ; that they enticed no one to join them, nor wished for any but those who could unite with them in their faith and practice. That under these circumstances, when they had sought a new world to establish their own forms of worship, and to renew the faith and purity of the primitive church, it was unjust, that they should be interrupted by the intrusion of other sects, who voluntarily came among them to create jealousy and disunion ; that they had a right, according to the laws they had made, to punish and drive away these intruders, and all those of their own faith who became apostates, or fell off from the ordinances of their church. They wanted none to join them, except they were of the same communion ; and they felt themselves called upon by the principles they professed, and all

the sacrifices they had made for them, to preserve their community from the contamination of false teachers, and the danger of religious dissention.

Their hatred of Roman Catholics was an abhorrence, confirmed by all the prejudices—some of them indeed, too well-founded, of the age in which they lived. Their prayers and sermons were seldom without some imprecation against them: their opposition to Episcopacy was sharpened by the actual sufferings they had drawn upon themselves for non-conformity: their animosity against Quakers was embittered by scorn for the mad extravagances of some of that sect; by their spiritual democracy, their abrogation of the priesthood under every form, and their contempt of all human learning and acquirements in teaching the duties of religion. This was touching our ancestors in very susceptible points. They had abjured the proud hierarchy at home, but had established a kind of one here, in which power was not less jealous, nor subordination less rigid, because the gradations were fewer and less ostentatious. There were wide chasms between those who were not in full communion, and the communicants, the deacons, and the pastors; besides the precedence that was awarded in this latter class to greater talents. The denunciation of learning excited indignation among men, who considered this, next to religion, the first object of their care; and this too mainly on the ground, that it would serve the interests of the former. They had among them many individuals who were men of profound

learning, distinguished scholars of the English universities; who could not endure that those acquirements should be scoffed at, which had cost them unremitting toil, and consumed the prime of their life to acquire.

Permit me, however, to remark to you, that their conduct towards the Quakers has been misrepresented, and excited an odium in that sect, which would have been less strong, if the provocations that were given had been more generally known. A farmer among them, told a friend of mine who was with the army in the Jerseys in 1776, that we had never been able to raise wheat in Massachusetts since we hung the Quakers; and possibly this belief may exist with some to this day. The Quakers however who annoyed our ancestors, were very different from the mild and benevolent Friends of our times. The former were stubborn and contumelious fanatics, extravagant and wild in their tenets and actions, setting at nought the dictates of common sense, and the common decencies of life. Some idea of this may be formed from the following anecdote, as related by an early historian. "Two women (of that sect) stark naked as ever they were born, came into our public assemblies, and they were (baggages that they were) adjudged unto the whipping post, for that piece of devilism." Such an outrage, if it were perpetrated now, would probably meet with as harsh treatment. But the executions for the crime of witchcraft were a deplorable delusion, the stain of which cannot indeed

be effaced, yet which equally disgraces the annals of France, England, and other countries; and in some of them similar crimes have been perpetrated at a later period, under circumstances that render them even more inexcusable.

It was a fortunate circumstance, that the limits of the colony were so narrow towards the south; as those who would not conform to the system established here, could in one day easily obtain a refuge without the Massachusetts or Connecticut jurisdiction. The small state of Rhode-Island, comprising the fine island of that name, and a strip from each of the contiguous states, offered an asylum to the persecuted of all descriptions; and by drawing off all who were of a different belief from the creed established in the adjoining territories, contributed greatly to that remarkable unanimity, which made the Congregational, Calvinistic churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut, for so long a period, not only the prevailing, but almost the only church existing within their limits. The celebrated Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode-Island, was a man of a liberal, enlightened mind, and upright, humane character; to whom we ought to render justice now, with more eagerness, as he was calumniated greatly in former times. Rhode-Island thus settled, became, as an early historian expresses it, a perfect "colluvies of heretical sects;" and the entire toleration that prevailed, which was indeed extraordinary in that age, filled with astonishment the intolerant champions of orthodoxy,

who thought such a state of things must soon draw down destruction on itself. It was, indeed, difficult to organize a society out of such discordant materials; and perfect freedom on matters of religion, which was salutary, was, perhaps, at that time, inevitably blended with laxity in other concerns, that had a deleterious influence on the morals of the people.

Having thus a neighbouring colony to which persons of other sects could easily resort, our ancestors kept their religious state without mixture with those, who were out of the pale of their church. They were constantly recruited by dissenters from England, who were induced to abandon a country where they were held in contempt, if not oppression, to join their brethren who were at the head of a colony. A correspondence from sympathy was naturally kept up, and a people who were always republicans, rejoiced at the establishment of the tyrannical English commonwealth; which placed their friends in power, and gratified them in the protection of what they conscientiously believed to be the pure, undefiled worship of God. Of course their submission to the Stuarts, while that luckless family was on the throne, though respectful in terms, was never cordial in feeling; their religious and political tenets both forbade it. They also early laid a solid foundation, in the establishment of the college at Cambridge, for perpetuating their influence, and rendering it respectable. Such indeed was their reputation for learning and

piety, that they were resorted to for clergymen, from the churches in other colonies of the continent, as well as from the West Indies. Their system engaged many principles in its support, and by its great unity of action, combined with the concurring causes already mentioned, enjoyed a fair promise of perpetuity. The ambitious adhered to it, because it was the certain and chief means of civil influence ; while a purer impulse secured the zealous support of the pious.

This remarkable unity, this almost exclusive existence of a single sect, was liable, however, in the natural course of events, to be broken by the intrusion of other forms, as actually happened. The Episcopalians began to obtain a footing towards the close of the seventeenth century. It was natural that the crown should favour their establishment, in order, to make religion an engine of state in the colonies, as it was at home ; most of the officers they appointed were of this persuasion. After the country became settled, and began to develope the means of commerce, many of the emigrants, when persecution had ceased, were of a class who removed with a view of bettering their temporal condition ; and some of this class, who belonged to the established church, increased the Episcopal churches here. These churches were always respectable, though not numerous. Those gentlemen, whose sympathies or interests made them royalists before the revolution, were generally of this church ; and there was something aristocra-

tic in the refinement and courtesy of its forms, simple as they are, which attracted those who were repelled by the prudish, starch demeanour, and democratic spirit of the dissenting churches. They never formed, however, more than a seventh of the congregations in Boston, and a much less proportion in other parts of New-England.

The Quakers also, who had not been entirely eradicated, obtained a secure and undisturbed settlement when the agitation of early dissensions had subsided. Their troublesome fanaticism gradually ceased, and the violent animosity they had excited, ceased with it. They built, and still retain a house of worship in Boston, but which has been closed for a long series of years, and it is a little singular that in this town, there should not be a sufficient number of Friends to form a small congregation. They are scattered over almost every part of the state; more commonly engaged in commerce and manufactures than in agriculture; some of them opulent, and all of them reputable.

The Baptists have greatly increased of late years, and are now one of the most numerous sects. Till a recent period, there was something of the primitive, congregational domination still perceptible in Massachusetts, though it was more in appearance than reality. Of course, so long as any semblance remained, that the government of the state leaned towards a particular church, the pernicious alliance of politics and religion was sure to follow. A political minority was eager to sympathize with a reli-

gious one ; and their grievances, whether fancied or real, led to a union in opposition, and this influence has been extensively shown. Fortunately, however, but little animosity has been created ; for the most extravagant party exaggeration could make out very slender cases for complaint. The Baptists grew more moderate when perfect toleration was established ; and a few eminent teachers in their ranks gave them more dignity. The learning and ability of some of their preachers in England, have made them amongst the most respectable of the dissenters there ; and this circumstance has had a useful influence here, by elevating their views, rather to improve themselves, than to increase their numbers. Among our proselyting sects, they may be considered the most respectable.

The Methodists are dispersed over the eastern states, with two churches in this capital. Their standing, in Massachusetts at least, is less respectable and more precarious than most of the other sects ; though there are many worthy, kindhearted people in the humble walks of life belonging to them. Their nasal whinings, camp meetings, and itinerant preachers, are not congenial to the taste of the community. The rational and sedate are disgusted ; the fervid and zealous have a resource in some of the churches of other sects ; and the people generally, are fond of a steady connexion with a pastor who is devoted to them. The wandering course of the Methodist preachers, their strange assemblies in the fields, and the call for violent, enthusiastic excitement in their worship, is

not suited to our climate or situation. Such a sect is better calculated for regions where religion comes periodically, like the fever and ague, than for those where it is a healthful, regular pulsation of the heart, producing a mild worship of the beneficent Father of the world, perennial as his mercies.

There are several other sects to be found among us, but they are not of sufficient importance to be enumerated. Last of all, came the Roman Catholics ; and few events of a subordinate kind were more remarkable than this. The foundation of a Catholic church in Boston, could only be surpassed by devoting a chamber in the Vatican to a Protestant chapel. Our ancestors had a tenfold horror of the church of Rome ; they first seceded from the English church, because they suspected some of the prelates of a leaning to popery. All the prejudices and fears, that could be produced from a junction of political jealousy and religious bigotry, they brought with them to these shores, and carefully nourished. The troubles created by the Indian wars, which were stimulated by the French in Canada, kept their animosity alive, and the Prince of darkness himself was hardly more an object of horror to them, than a Jesuit. They preached and prayed most stoutly and frequently against the scarlet lady of Babylon, against the antichrist of Rome ; and even down to the last generation, used all the trite terms of vituperation, that were so often applied to the Pope. Their invectives against him were so well known, that a

gentleman of Boston who was presented to Clement XIV. was asked by that pontiff, with a good-natured smile, "whether Dr. Sewall still continued to pray for the downfall of Babylon."*

It was not till after the peace of 1783, that any attempts were made to found a Catholic church in Massachusetts. A very few Catholic families are dispersed over the state, but the only regular church is in Boston.† Their first place of worship was a small chapel, since taken down; and it was a singular circumstance, that this chapel was originally built by French Protestants, who fled from Catholic persecution. In its commencement the congregation was small, and not very fortunate in its pastors. It increased gradually by emigrants from Ireland, until the building they occupied was unable to contain them. They then built a new church, partly by the great and meritorious exertions of the poor people who composed the congregation, whose zeal made them contribute all they could spare from their own support; partly by the contributions of some individuals among the Protestants, whose liberality on this occasion was

* Before the papal power had dwindled to its present limits, the Court of Rome was amply supplied with intelligence from all parts of the world. A knowledge of minute details in distant places will not appear wonderful, to those, who know how the system of secret intelligence is matured by the governments who maintain it; what seems mysterious, is in fact very simple. Boston was long the head quarters of puritanism, and being most zealously opposed to the French power in Canada and the extension of the Catholic religion, the Jesuit missionaries, who were the agents for extending both, would of course furnish a list of the chief individuals in the place, to the ecclesiastical police of the Pope.

† There are two Catholic chapels in Maine.

not merely of the purse, but, considering the previous, hereditary prejudices, of the mind. All feelings of this kind have so nearly subsided, that the present generation can hardly picture to themselves the bigotry that oppressed even the last. The Pope is no longer an object of fear, and if the Catholic religion could get rid of some of its encumbrances, which are now not only burdensome, but ridiculous; and revert to the simplicity of primitive institutions, many classes of protestants would approach them without distrust, and this most ancient Christian church be regarded with higher reverence. The church in Boston has derived the greatest advantage from the French Revolution, which drove into exile so large a portion of the priesthood. Two individuals, of great acquirements, full of charity and piety, driven from their distracted country, received the charge of this infant church. They have fulfilled the numerous parochial duties required by the Catholic religion, with apostolical simplicity and evangelical zeal, neither attempting to make proselytes nor to excite controversy; and I presume it cannot be disputed, and I hope will not be considered invidious to say, (the circumstances of their congregation being taken into view,) that their ministry is by far the most arduous and useful in the town.*

The cause of orthodoxy hardly gained enough by this accession of a church, which considers itself

* One of the gentlemen alluded to, the Reverend Doctor Matignon, is since dead.

the only orthodox one, to make up for a defection it experienced a few years ago. One of the three Episcopal churches, called before the Revolution, the King's chapel, soon after the conclusion of the war, changed its faith, renounced the doctrine of the Trinity, keeping the written prayers of the former church with such alterations as the change of tenets rendered necessary, and became openly an Unitarian church. A circumstance so remarkable might seem, at a distance, to be attended with insuperable obstacles. But you know that the edifices here are not the property of the state, as in Europe, but of the individuals who compose the congregation; and that they have a right to dispose of them as they please. The church had lost by the Revolution, some of its members, as well as its rector, who were refugees, and the influence and persuasion of their new pastor carried a majority of those who remained. According to the practice of our country, the majority governed; the subject was regularly debated in the congregation, and the new creed adopted by a great plurality. Those who adhered to the ancient faith sold their property in the church, and joined themselves to congregations who maintained it. The proceedings were all fair and open, and there was no oppression, though many mourned for this startling defection.

You will here excuse a little digression on the subject of the name of this church, which has caused much anxiety about our political soundness;

particularly in those quarters where "patriotism" is fed from such abundant sources, that it has overflowed the bounds of our own country, and covered plunder and piracy, if reports be true, to no inconsiderable extent. Before the Revolution it was called *The King's Chapel*; after that epoch, *the Stone Chapel*, as a distinction, when there was no other church built of that material, and latterly it has taken the name of *King's Chapel*. This was done in order to hold a legacy devised by a person who died many years ago, and which, when it came to the church, had, through the great increase in the value of property, risen to an income of 12 or 1300 dollars a year. It was devised to the rector, wardens and vestry of the King's Chapel, for certain purposes, and a resumption of the name, though without the definite article, was necessary to hold the bequest. Thus much for the name; but something more singular is connected with this affair. The testator did not probably foresee the political changes, and certainly not the religious ones, that have taken place. Experience has proved that there were many more things in the world "than were dreamt of in his philosophy." A part of the income, and what at the time he perhaps thought would be the largest part, he directed should be paid to certain clergymen for preaching, during Lent, sermons on particular subjects, some of which were the great points of orthodox faith. This of course must be complied with, and the walls on those occasions echo with the sounds of

ancient doctrines, which they had long ceased to reverberate. The rector, a man of singular purity and elevation of sentiment, it was said objected to receiving this legacy under these conditions, but the church had a right to it in law, and had perhaps no alternative but to claim it.

A preparation for a gradual dereliction of the dogmas of orthodoxy had been silently, and almost imperceptibly, making in the congregational churches for a long period. The austere and bigoted character of religious opinions and habits, during the first generations of the colony, together with the great leading principle of all fanatics and ultra Christians, that faith is every thing and works nothing, became repugnant to the people, when greater variety of pursuits, and more enlightened views, were laid open to them. The discipline of earlier times was not relaxed without a struggle, and occasional attempts that were made to enforce it in all its vigour, more surely prepared its future abandonment. The semblance was kept up after the reality was extinct. Such a state of things had a pernicious tendency to disgust men with what they ought to reverence; and aided by the sarcastic tone of infidelity, which pervaded many fashionable writings of the last generation; was constantly increasing that class of persons who were rigid in their observances, because it aided their worldly designs, and were therefore fully convinced that religion was an excellent thing for others. Those who had purer views, found it necessary to re-

nounce what was tyrannical and intolerant in former practice, to keep up with the progress of intelligence, and to narrow the sphere of hypocrisy.

In the mean time, the number of writings under different names, according to their different degrees of dissent from ancient fundamental points of orthodoxy, had prodigiously increased. The English, and more especially the Germans, after having buried the Classics under vast accumulations of commentaries, began to submit the Bible to their exegetical researches; and passages which involved the faith and perhaps the peace of millions, were to be expunged as forgeries, or erroneous translations, from the collation of antique MSS. I am not quite convinced, that this is expedient; though I am far from denying the prodigious learning of some of those commentators, or the great services they have rendered to theological students. We do not live in an age, or in a country, where it will be possible to doubt of the advantages generally, of free inquiry, and yet there are topics where it would be worse than useless. Biblical criticism is now pursued in the same spirit that investigated the ancient Classics, with a profound reverence for adverbs and prepositions, and very little deference to any thing else. Pedants and sophists will uphold this practice, but before the matter descends to their competency, many previous questions will occur to considerate men. Perhaps they might decide that the former should continue the pursuit, and that the breath of time would blow away their

chaff and leave the grains of wheat behind. There seems, however, to be a mean betwixt the superstition and craft that would retain the Bible in a dead language, or keep it from being read at all; and the rashness that would subject it to all the trials of profane analysis, and all the experiments of scholastic vanity.

The metaphysicians come readily to the aid of the grammarians, and if the one cannot get rid of the words, the other involves the sense in dark confusion. The union of metaphysics with religion, is almost always disastrous to the latter.* They either blast it with doctrines, that turn its genial influence into an inconceivable system, fit only to engender despair and horror, or they involve it in a maze of sophistry, that destroys a part, and leaves the rest uncertain. The pious, useful servant of God, in singleness of heart, has nothing to do with either, while he is pointing out to his followers the consolations they may derive during this transitory state of evil and suffering; or teaching them how to render themselves worthy of them, and the higher existence they promise. When I hear one of these film-gathering metaphysicians toiling and twisting about in vain subtleties, and beating his poor brain against the impervious, invisible medium, through

* When metaphysics lead to mysticism under female agency, the mischief may be extensive, and the consequences are sometimes similar with characters the most unlike, and in circumstances wholly different. A curious parallel might be drawn between archbishop Fenelon and Madame Guyon in Paris; sir Harry Vane and Mrs. Hutchinson in Boston; and the Emperor Alexander and Madame Krudener at St. Petersburg; the quiet of the state made it necessary to banish each of these ladies.

which the light is transmitted to it; and not satisfied with that light, endeavouring to gain, with his gross corporeal faculties, the knowledge of ethereal things, to soar into the glorious air of heaven, which can only support the purified spirit; it recalls to mind one of those luckless insects, which having got into the room on a summer's day, exhausts one's patience by buzzing and thumping against the pane of glass, that he mistakes for an opening into the air as well as the light, and through which he vainly endeavours to pass, till tired and spent with his efforts, he falls into a corner and is forgotten.

This desertion of the ancient platform was well understood, but little talked about, until a few years since, when the churches of the congregational order in Boston had all their pulpits filled with young men:—some of these, gifted with the brightest talents and the purest feelings, have been since, alas! too untimely removed. Their immediate predecessors differed but little from them; yet the great change of tenets seemed to attract more observation, when all the fathers were removed, and the talents of these young men excited the admiration of their friends and the envy of others. Still no controversy existed, except some indirect skirmishing in periodical works. The taste for polemical divinity was almost extinct among enlightened people. Points of faith were rarely subjects of discussion; charity in its widest sense, the practice of the moral virtues, and attendance on public worship,

had been the principal subjects inculcated, and were generally held in the most estimation; devotion to particular dogmas, had been converted into affection for their pastor in the breasts of his parishioners; and clergymen, not creeds, were the subjects of conversation. This was admirably exemplified in the sly remark of a celebrated foreigner, whose extensive knowledge of our country makes his society a constant source of delight and instruction; and who being asked at the south, after having visited Boston, whether he did not hear a great deal of conversation about religion there? replied, *No, not exactly so, I did not hear much said about religion in Boston, but I heard a great deal of talk about ministers.* This state of calm, so unusual in the regions of theology, was wonderfully continued; it was broken at last by an attack from the Calvinists a year or two since, that was meant to provoke a discussion, which it seemed indeed impossible to avoid, since it accused men of disingenuousness and duplicity, who were incapable of such practices.

Calvinism has seldom appeared to more disadvantage, positively and negatively, than in this discussion. I do not now allude to the merit of the pamphlets that were written; you will not suppose me to have taken any interest in the most unprofitable of all vanities, a theological controversy; nor do I refer to the gentlemen who wrote on the part of the assailants, but to the first causes, the secret movers of this dispute. Those, however, who

knew nothing of this, but engaged in it to obtain an advantage to their cause, must have been greatly disappointed. The crisis in other times might have been dangerous to the defendants; but they probably gained rather than lost by it. The lesson will not be useless to the others, if it is improved to all the extent of its bearings. On this occasion a gentleman, who is remarkable for the promptness of his zeal, and the ability with which his pen follows it, though a layman, took a part, moved by warm affection for his friends, and indignation against their enemies. His pamphlet had this title, "Are you a Calvinist or a Christian!" A Dutch gentleman who was here at the time, saw this publication, and I was much amused with the comic expression of surprise he exhibited at this title, for the book I found he would not read. *What*, said he, *the Calvinists are not Christians!* and he resolved with true filial piety to send home two copies of it to his poor mother, who had carefully though vainly inculcated upon him, that the converse of the proposition was the truth.

Allow me, before I proceed, to explain to whom I refer, in speaking harshly of Calvinism. Far be it from me to think ill of the Calvinists as a body, for it would be thinking ill of a large majority of my countrymen, enrolled in different sects. It is not of those theoretical Calvinists, who serve under a rigid creed, and yet have their bosoms filled with the love of their neighbour; and who endeavouring all things, hoping all things, even of

those who do not believe with them, do not go in pursuit of that neighbour, to the confines of the earth, overlooking with sour contumely the wretch who is pining before them. I would not think ill of any person for believing too much, which certainly is not the prevailing error of our times, provided his faith does not make him disdainful of good works. But it is of those practical Calvinists, whose rancorous ambition makes them the tyrants of society; who illustrate their faith by treating mankind as though they were really a herd of villains and convicts; who attempt to make innocent amusements serious offences, teaching that it is dangerous to go to a ball or a concert, and perfectly harmless to frequent evening lectures. Men who are voluntary, public accusers, and forming a self-constituted tribunal, animated by the spirit of the inquisition, but fortunately without its power. It is of those who make Calvinism the means of promoting worldly views, and temporal domination; a combination, which if not the most dangerous, is the most odious, that human character can present.

Among the congregational churches, there is one which has receded but little from the ancient line, and maintains what is called, moderate Calvinism. There were a few individuals, however, who were not satisfied with this; and a handsome meeting-house was built by them some years since, in a fashionable part of the town. They began their course under the guidance of one of the most

athletic of the sect. He gave them the most fervid and frequent descriptions of the burning lake, until its glare seemed flashing round the walls ; he placed before them all the nations of India, a vast "current of souls rushing into it;" he calculated with inimitable precision, "making allowance for low latitudes and omitting infants and small children, how many plunged into this gulph every day, every hour, every minute;" yet with many similar topics of edification, urged with great zeal and force, his ministry was not very flourishing ; and after a time he returned to his former friends, where such truths were probably better received. The church under its present pastor is more successful. It has been a favourite object to establish it, and visits have been paid by some of the most eminent Presbyterian clergymen from other states. Their preaching in this town gave very little pleasure, at least to those who were not their immediate followers. They urged with vehemence the most difficult dogmas of their creed, which had little tendency to persuade ; and the imprecations they made use of caused, in those who were not accustomed to them, a shuddering disgust.

There are seven or eight churches that are sometimes called Unitarian, but you must not understand that they are all strictly so, or that they agree in their creed. Probably no two of them agree exactly. There are shades of difference among those who have ceased to acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity, but some have diverged much more than

others. A part of them would be satisfactory to the orthodox, on most points of their preaching : generally their discourses turn more on morality and the great practical duties of christians, on the love of God and our neighbour, on which two commandments hang all the law and the prophets, than on points of faith. But this independence leaves each to follow his own judgment exclusively, and opens a wide extent for sermonizing ; and if in one of these churches you hear a sermon, which would not be disowned by any of the great divines of the last century, you may go to another, and endure a discussion on Madame de Stael and the Edinburgh Review.

It ought to be mentioned, to the honour of our Unitarians, that they have not much of the proselyting spirit, and the little they have exhibited, was perhaps in self-defence. Zeal in this way would be extremely incongruous in them ; it would be like eating an ice-cream with a hot spoon. Here there is not much to fear ; hitherto the sympathy of liberal minds has been in favour of the Unitarians, even among those who regretted the course they followed ; not only on account of the virtues and talents which they possessed, but because it was felt that their cause involved the general possession of religious, and, in some respects of civil liberty. The rancorous spirit that was opposed to them, aimed at universal influence. Public feeling, however, is now very enlightened and impartial on these points ; and if it would not

endure the burning of Servetus in an *auto da fe*, neither would it allow of a bull *Unigenitus*, to excommunicate the Jansenists.

A political domination, by any religious sect, can never happen again in our fortunate country. Some attempts that were made here, such as giving the Andover Theological College a right of forcing a creed upon their students, and the plan of disfranchising the citizens on the holiest day of the week, and filling the country with spies and petty tyrants under the name of Tythingmen, failed in a manner that will preclude a repetition. The Sabbatists rely upon the fourth commandment to support their Jewish observance of the Sabbath, yet the Iconoclasts might as well cite the authority of the second, for destroying every statue in the houses of our *dilletanti*, or the signs of our inns : a literal application of either of these commandments to the present state of society, would be equally absurd and impracticable ; and the Christian dispensation has clearly restricted the rigid minuteness of those two commandments, which were so remarkably designed for a particular people, under peculiar circumstances, and for a period which has been accomplished. Connecticut was the last state where any power was exercised in this way, and this has been lately subverted, and its agents covered with signal confusion. Of all the privileges of this glorious country, there is none more magnificent, than its entire exemption from political despotism, clothed in the garb of religion. There is no lesson that

we are destined to teach mankind, no example that we hold out to them so fraught with wisdom, so productive of beneficent results, as the entire severance of church and state; giving to the former all the rights which the latter can protect, and none of the power it can abuse. Though we never suffered so much as the nations of Europe, from the incalculable evils that are every where created by this union, so noxious to both, and so useless to every thing but abuse, yet we arrived gradually at the perfect system we now enjoy. The state is relieved from a troublesome burden, and religion from a dangerous protector. The former, where a connexion exists, is often in the most imminent danger from the quarrels of the latter; and this in its turn, is sure to be made basely subservient to the intrigues of the other. When we take into view the innumerable calamities, the desolating wars, the horrible persecutions, and the withering tyranny that has resulted from this fatal system; and in despite of the progress of intelligence, the enormous evils it is even now causing to the most enlightened nations of Europe, we may pride ourselves, from having first practically shown the safety and advantages of an opposite course, on being the benefactors of mankind.

It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to give the numbers belonging to these different sects. In Boston the non-orthodox of the Congregational class greatly prevail; and there are many congregations of the same negative description in other parts of

the eastern states ; the majority however are Calvinistic, though there are many clergymen who avoid dwelling exclusively on the five points in their exhortations, and who adopt a mild course of practice, without positively renouncing ancient doctrines, which they think it inexpedient to subvert.

In Connecticut the Congregationalists are almost exclusively Calvinists, and the latter creed predominates throughout New-England. Since the Calvinists lost the control of the university at Cambridge, they have set up a theological college for themselves at Andover. This seminary has been very liberally endowed, and is in a flourishing state, having about seventy students qualifying themselves for the pulpit. They are taught a creed, which is a mixture of Calvinism and Hopkinsianism ; but assent to the creed must be voluntary, the legislature having refused to indulge the college in forcing their creed on the students. The professors are men of learning and ability, and the institution is in a growing condition.

Clergymen have much more social intercourse with laymen here, than in the middle states. This is a modification only of former custom. They originally exercised a vigilant influence over every thing that was done in civil as well as in church affairs, and the respect due to their station was every where felt. Their watchfulness over their flock extended to a minute observance of all their movements ; and the interdiction of many innocent amusements, was seconded by a close inspection of the habits of private life. This was continued till

the Revolution. Since that time, the clergy have been glad to get rid of an odious species of inquisition, which their parishioners would be apt now to consider in the light of a usurpation. Reserving all the right of remonstrating with those communicants who give occasion to any scandal, they leave the ordinary routine of society, to be regulated by the discretion and prudence of those who compose it. Their society is always courted, and it is one of their difficulties to avoid entertainments, that would consume too much of their time. They are frequently met with in social parties, where they are always welcome. It is obvious, that this species of intercourse must be attended with the best consequences. Their presence imposes a delicate kind of restraint, not the less strong, because nothing is assumed, which tends to keep conversation from becoming licentious, or indulgence immoderate. Religion itself loses none of its charms, when its ministers, by their personal intercourse, condescend to a cheerful approbation of innocent gayety and refined amusement.

I will conclude this long letter, by giving you an opinion, that the Episcopal church will hereafter increase, and hold, at no very distant day, a much larger relative proportion to other denominations than it now does ; and I will offer you a brief statement of the reasons, on which this opinion is founded. You may put down what you please to any prepossession, which you may suppose me to have, when I tell you that I am an Episcopalian. As

to the difference between the Presbyterian and Episcopal forms, I should say as Counsellor Pleydell did to Colonel Mannering—"I hope a plain man may go to heaven without thinking about them at all ; but I love to pray where my fathers prayed before me, without thinking worse of the Presbyterian forms, because they do not affect me with the same associations." The case will now come fairly before you.

Accompany me back to the origin of the colony.—Our ancestors were driven into non-conformity by the arrogance, the bigotry, and the indiscretion of prelates, who met a restless and inquiring spirit, with a more extensive display of ceremonial observances, and a more eager assertion of supremacy. Archbishop Laud, in particular, who seems to have had a strong leaning towards the Romish church, by requiring the most rigid attention to what a more liberal age would consider trifles, drove some of the ablest scholars and purest minds among his clergy into dissent ; continued persecution made them more untractable, and finally exasperated them into a thorough non-conformity. This country was opened as an asylum, and they and their followers, disgusted with a hierarchy, which exhibited too many examples of the priest, and too few of the pastor, fled to it for shelter. A voyage across the Atlantic, in our times a mere pleasurable trip, was then far otherwise. Grief and hatred were deeply nourished against those, who had driven them into a distant and dangerous exile. The individuals

particularly who first went to Holland, and came afterwards to Plymouth, saw Calvinism in all its vigour in that country, and profited by their visit ; but among the first emigrants, there were some who did not wish to renounce the Episcopal church entirely, because of the abuses which had crept into it. Some of these are mentioned by an early writer, who styles them “godly Episcopalians,” and who would never join themselves with the independent congregations, assigning this pithy reason—“that they had left England because they did not like the *lord bishops*, but they could not join with them, because they would not be under the *lord brethren*.” Those who came to Salem hesitated what course to adopt. Episcopacy was given up with some reluctance, but at that time they would not probably have secured their freedom, if they had not become independents ;—yet, if Episcopacy had been then, what it now is, cleared of many excrescences and useless repetitions in the service, purified from several idle ceremonies, and emancipated from a hierarchy that depended on a distant sovereign, and not on the people of its charge, a considerable number, at least of the first settlers, would have gladly maintained it.

It is indeed fortunate that Episcopacy was not established ; if it had been, and the people had continued as much under the influence of religion, the Revolution would have been long procrastinated. A clergy dependent on a foreign appointment, would have always bowed to that power, and

sacrificed the interests of their followers to their own personal aggrandizement. This would have been the natural consequence ; the examples now before our eyes in some countries of Europe, show how extensive is the mischief it occasions. In this country the Episcopal clergy were almost all unfriendly to the Revolution, and their influence was constantly exerted against it. This kept alive a feeling of jealousy and dislike towards the church, founded on very just and sufficient motives.

The same tone of subservience to a patron and haughty demeanour to the parishioners, which is not very uncommon in England, would, in the course of time, have been felt here with increased force, since the patron was essentially indifferent to the interests of the country. The numerous abuses which have crept into the church establishment in England, the wide departure from the primitive character of the clerical function, which have made the clergy of the established church, according to the just remark of an intelligent traveller, "little more than an aristocratic body in the state ;" would never have been endured by a people, who had fled here to avoid such evils. And till the Revolution severed all connexion, the Episcopal clergy were always obnoxious to suspicion. Now that this church is left to itself, it has become as national in its character, as any other denomination ; its ministers and their congregations are connected from mutual choice, depend on each other, without any foreign intervention, and the true character of the Christian

pastor being restored, the affection of his flock follows of course.

Episcopacy being thus freed from the alloy of temporal power, from the scandal of sinecures and the odiousness of simony; the rector of a church stands in that relation which would have prevented one of the original causes of dissent; and the sect enjoys the advantages of a very ancient, venerable form of church government, the want of which has often proved inconvenient to the Congregationalists. The service, as it is adopted in this country, retains all that is essential, and is freed from what was mere ceremony and repetition; which superstition, and the fear of innovation, still retain in England. Episcopacy, as it exists in Scotland, is on the same foundation that it is in the United States; purified from all political influence, it is hardly an object of jealousy to the sour, dominating intolerance of Presbyterians. Episcopal ordination, to say no more, is at least as valid as Presbyterian; and I have heard clergymen, both of the orthodox and liberal description, say they should be very willing to adopt a form of prayer, if their congregations would give their assent.

The ancient prayers used in this church, so admirable for their simplicity, pathos, comprehensiveness, and humility, can hardly be repeated without emotion. The facility and assistance, which these written prayers give to fix attention and assist devotion, are obvious. The particular services of the church, especially, impress deeply

even those who have not been bred in its forms. Thus the profound solemnity and impressiveness of the marriage and funeral services, have sometimes caused them to be used by persons who belonged to other sects. There is, too, something gratifying and ennobling, in the associations they awaken; to kneel to the same exercises, to repeat the same prayers, that so many millions, so many great, good, and illustrious of the human race have said before us, during so many centuries; appears to connect us with past ages, with the generations that are gone, and we almost seem to partake of the dignity that is attached to what is ancient and permanent.

In the first zeal and hurry of secession, extemporaneous prayers, being then replete with enthusiasm, may be fully entered into by an audience under the impulse of the same feelings. But this system in general supposes greater gifts in the preacher, and greater abstraction and power of concentrating attention in the hearer, than falls to the lot of most preachers, or most congregations: and unless very unusual powers exist, the effect is not very edifying. A congregation becomes cold, listless, and impatient, while the preacher is hesitating in his supplications, stringing together ill-assorted texts of scripture; or what is intolerable, metaphysical subtleties, puerile novelties and prettinesses of expression. The danger too is great, of running into mere brilliant display, and giving occasion to such a remark, as was once made on a particular prayer, of which it was observed; "that it was the most eloquent prayer

ever addressed to a Boston audience." The Presbyterian system of prayer, is so unfavourable to devotion in an audience, so adapted to indolence and indifference—such a strange evasion of the duty of prayer, by substituting one individual to pray for all ; that it must have been introduced by the first founders, because they could not separate the prayers of the church from its corruptions, and were afraid to retain any one principle, lest some abuses should come with it. Otherwise, the recital of prayers by the whole congregation accompanying the minister, would seem one of the most useful, indispensable forms ; appropriately terminated by his separately asking the blessing of heaven on his flock. The deep sympathy, the pervading emotion, that can wrap and blend a whole congregation in the orisons of the preacher, can exist only at rare periods and under the excitements of some interesting occasion, or of the most powerful talents. In a general way, a quiet and decent attention is the utmost that can be expected ; and this very repose will be apt to lead some minds into wide excursions of thought ; while the attention of others will be interrupted by the passing of a carriage, the fall of a book, or the rustling of a breeze.

There are inconveniences attending the course pursued by the liberal party among Congregationalists, from the want of some standard to confine the aberrations of teachers within known limits. Otherwise, there seems to be no security that posterity will be content with the doctrines they now retain ;

but they may find something in these which they cannot understand, and if the progress of improvement continues till there is no mystery left, it is extremely difficult to say, how much of Christianity will be finally tolerated. If, however, there should always be enough to constitute a distinct sect, and satisfy the refined and enlightened portion of society with a pure system of morality; there will be many seceders who require a certain degree of awe and veneration to enter into their religious feelings. The most beautiful morality will seem cold to many minds, if it is not given in connexion with what is awful and even mysterious. Satisfaction in religion does not require the same demonstration, as in mathematics. Mystery surrounds us every where; the existence of the world, of ourselves, every object in nature, is lost in obscurity at last; the origin and termination are alike unknown; and we are obliged to refer the whole to a Being, whose first, necessary attribute, infinity, is utterly incomprehensible. Some mystery in religion seems analogous to what we see in nature, whose operations elude even the crucible and microscope; and the degree of indistinctness occasioned by the former, calls in the solace of faith, to compensate for difficulties that assail our reason, on which many repose with confidence and hope. A scheme, therefore, made perfectly clear to mere human intelligence, however closely interwoven with a pure morality, will not suffice for all; and under such a system of preaching, several would be inclined to make the

complaint, though with less coarseness and violence, of the old woman in the Tales of my Landlord,—
 “For souls are hardened and deadened, and the
 “mouths of fasting multitudes are crammed wi’
 “fizenless bran, instead of the sweet word in season ;
 “and mony an hungry, starving creature, when he
 “sits down on a Sunday forenoon to get something
 “that might warm him to the great work, has a
 “dry clatter of morality driven about his lugs.”

The adoption of the Episcopal form would prevent some of this difficulty. The liturgy, embodying the ancient, venerable, sublime doctrines of Christianity, clothed in the language of the fathers and the apostles, will satisfy the feelings of those who have been taught to venerate those doctrines ; who demand something more than a system of rhetoric and geometry for their religious feelings, and who are ready to give the *quia impossibile est*, as a reason for their belief. Assent may be given to those doctrines with different shades of conviction ; as it must have been by the millions who have professed them. All rational minds may find shelter within its pale. Those who prefer to preach, or to hear a frequent repetition of the great tenets of orthodoxy, may pursue them to the very brink of the Calvinistic gulf ; while those who love rather to dwell on the maxims and injunctions in the moral code of the gospel, are at full liberty to pursue it. If a preacher has a congregation, whose callous and sluggish habits require strong stimulants, he may administer them ; and another who

presides over a more refined and feeling people, may edify them with the topics of charity and devotion.

In the ancient colony laws, fines and imprisonment were laid upon the heinous offender, who dared to celebrate that immortal day, which for seventeen centuries at least, has excited the joy and devotion of the Christian world. Our ancestors dreaded mince pies as dangerous to the soul, which are now considered as noxious only to the body. A voluntary, spontaneous, and natural approximation to the practice of the great majority of Christians, in celebrating the festival of Christmas, is growing into a habit among our different sects. If the numerous fasts and feasts of the Roman Church are an excess in one direction, is not the refusal to commemorate the great festival and fast of the church, an extravagance in another? What would seem more natural, or more impressive, than the religious observation of those two days, the coming and departing of the Divine author of our religion; the one as a day of thanks and gratitude to God, the other of humiliation and grief? And yet they were once denounced as grievous abominations. The practice of reading the Bible publicly was also proscribed, and the Lord's Prayer is still but seldom used;* yet how blind and bigoted must he be that

* The custom of saying prayers over the dead, at least an innocent ceremony was long dreaded as a popish practice. The first instance where prayer was used at a funeral, by congregationalists, was when the Rev. Dr. Mayhew was buried in 1766, and the first funeral sermon was on the death of Dr. Cooper.

would not be ashamed of such neglect, when the danger of doing any thing that is practised in the church, can no longer be feared! The service of the church, which comprises its prayers and portions of scripture, presents something stable, a secure resting place for devotion, which is satisfied by these, when it may not be edified by the sermon. This advantage will not be lightly estimated by those reflecting minds, who look to future consequences. For in the course of time, with the inevitably lessening interest which is felt in loose, uncertain prayers that are said for them; and with the dereliction of those severe and mysterious doctrines, that keep zeal alive, what will be the motive for going to a place of worship, except to hear an able or brilliant discourse? and when that becomes the predominant inclination, what will be the degree of difference between such a congregation, and a respectable audience attending to one of our annual orations, or listening to the recital of Collins' Ode on the Passions? This is exemplified in a way, that would appear very strange to persons not accustomed to it. It is a general practice to inquire of those who have been to meeting, "How did you like the sermon? Was it a new one? Were you pleased with the prayer?—and corresponding remarks in return. O yes, the sermon was a delightful one—It was a very brilliant discourse; his prayer pleased me very well; there were some fine expressions in it, but it was too long." A solemn act of public worship is talked of, and criti-

cised very much in the same way, as if it was an academical exercise, that the individual had attended.

The purposes of ambition can no longer be promoted by belonging to any particular sect. It is now never, I believe, a question in any case, what sect a man belongs to, by those who are to place him in any civil or political station. A candidate derives no more influence from being a Congregationalist, than from being a Baptist or an Episcopalian, which was not always the case. Some opposition was made a few years since to the re-election of a very excellent governor, because he was a Unitarian, but this opposition was peculiar, and probably would not occur again. The domination of a particular sect could not now exist, however powerful such a sect might be ; and since the Congregationalists have separated and formed in reality two sects, the Liberal and the Calvinistic, the power they once possessed is broken. The choice of a form of worship is therefore uninfluenced by any worldly considerations.

I may add one circumstance more : no sectarian triumph can be gained by this suggested increase of Episcopacy. If it takes place, it is a mere question of expediency with the individual, and no advantage can arise to those who are now Episcopals. This church, to its honour, is not a proselyting one ; and the "gentle indifference" for which it is proverbial, is true here, as elsewhere. No ill will can therefore be excited against it on

this account. Nothing indeed ought to inspire more distrust, than the spirit of making proselytes among different Christian sects. It is very natural that a good man, who is sincere in his convictions, should desire to see others adopt the same sentiments; and his benevolence may sometimes lead him into the error of attempting to induce them to join with him. This disposition ought to be cautiously guarded against. However a man may deceive himself, vanity has a share in it; it is often associated with the most dangerous passions of the human breast, ambition and avarice; and whenever it prevails to any extent and for any length of time, religion becomes only the cover for their gratification.

Generally speaking, religion is honoured here, and bigotry has much decreased. A regular attendance on public worship is almost universal. The state leaves every man to choose what religion he pleases, but obliges him to a slight contribution for the support of some one. The stipends of the clergy are regulated by agreement between them and their congregations, and when once stipulated, are recoverable by law so long as the agreement subsists. In the country there is sometimes a parsonage with a small farm attached to it; the occupancy of this, with a supply of firewood, and from 200 to 1000 dollars a year, constitute the emoluments. In larger towns it may be something more, and in the capital is from two to three thousand dollars a year, which is not more than enough to meet the increas-

ed expenses ; in congregations where the minister does not receive very considerable presents, there is not so much liberality, when the respective means and expenses of living are considered, as is shown in many of the country parishes. On the whole, the religious condition is in the highest degree fortunate ; there is no coercion ; every sect is protected, and the clergy are respected and beloved.

LETTER IV.

COMMERCE.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN attempting to give you some account of the commerce of this section, I can hardly expect to offer any thing new ; yet as you have been, perhaps, in the habit of considering rather the results of the entire trade of the United States, than of any other particular part ; a cursory view of the commercial resources of the Eastern states in particular, may, by comparison, give more distinct ideas of the whole. I do not mean to offer you minute statements, or amounts in figures, which

would only be giving extracts from some of our statistical works ; but to make a few general observations on the principal resources which we possess.

The first of these, undoubtedly, is to be found in our population, its numbers and character. Between the southern frontiers of Connecticut and the eastern one of Maine, there are eight hundred miles of sea-coast, containing numerous harbours ; several rivers, navigable for sea vessels, from twenty to an hundred miles, empty themselves within these limits. Almost the whole of this coast, and the banks of these rivers, are lined with inhabitants, accustomed to commercial and maritime affairs. This region is so healthful, that besides supplying these increasing branches of employment, it annually sends off a surplus, to meet the demands of less healthy and less populous shores. The whole of this population receives the rudiments of education in a sufficient degree, to qualify even its poorest members for advancing their fortunes, if they have the skill and disposition to better them. The excitement produced by the great wealth, which has accrued from the pursuit of commerce during the last thirty years, keeps this population in a state of restless activity, calculating observation, and adventurous enterprise, which, without any exaggeration, may be said to be unequalled by any other country.

A considerable part of this population, thus conveniently situated, is early accustomed to look for

a living from the ocean, which breaks at their feet ; a soil comparatively sterile forces them in some sort to share, by freighting the products of richer climes ; they take to the water as easily, and almost as early as the broods of water fowls ; they pass as much of their time on shore, as those sea-birds which only resort to it to make their nests ; their path is on “ the mountain wave,” and like the same birds, they float on it gaily and fearlessly, if the daily reckoning only shows the desired difference in latitude and longitude. As a nursery of seamen, this district affords one of the most valuable in the world. The whale fishery, which is carried on in both oceans, the fishery of the banks of Newfoundland, and the various fisheries nearer home, form the hardest and best of sailors. The manner in which these fisheries are prosecuted, being not on wages, but on shares, gives habits of economy, watchfulness and industry, that are invaluable.* The coasting trade, which is daily increasing, adds a vast additional supply of hardy and excellent seamen ; all these have their homes and families on these

* The sailor tribe as it exists elsewhere is hardly to be found in this district. That heartless, reckless improvidence, the brutal and hurried waste of hard earned wages in the most stupid frolics, which are encouraged in England from obvious motives of policy ; as they tend to retain this class of men in a slavish state, both hopeless and motiveless on shore, are seldom exhibited among us. Almost all our seamen are sober, economical and either owning some share in a vessel, or some land for a farm. This applies to the greater part of the population on the shores of Massachusetts and Maine. Most of the people near the sea coast of the latter have been sailors for a time, and occasionally go on some short voyage, if they find they can earn a few dollars more than by staying at home. There are many villages, where a population of farmers would be found to be good sailors in a moment if the occasion required it.

shores, to which they are strongly attached, though they are absent from them for weeks, months, or even years together. In alluding to this attachment, I cannot help recalling the mistake of a very acute and profound observer, which furnishes a very striking instance of the errors, into which theory is apt to lead even the ablest minds. Talleyrand, in his *Essay on Colonies*, speaking of our fishermen, considers them, "a timid, indolent race ; that they are cosmopolites, and a few codfish more or less determine their country." As to the timidity and indolence, the expression of Burke,— "Every sea is vexed by their fisheries," may be a sufficient answer ; as to their being cosmopolites, and migrating with the codfish ; the latter have not been more steady to the submarine mountains of Newfoundland, than the former have been to the rocky and sandy shores, whence they annually go in pursuit of them ; and where there progenitors have successively resided for nearly two centuries. from the first settlement of the country.

This section furnishes supplies of the various kinds of timber used in ship-building, and abounds with mechanics in all the various branches connected with naval construction ; with these advantages, ships are built here with great economy, and a very large portion of the tonnage employed both in the foreign and coasting trade, is owned in these states. Having therefore the advantage of possessing an ample supply of seamen, and being the chief residence of the ship-

owners, they have great advantages for engaging profitably in the carrying trade, foreign and domestic. The produce of the fisheries, of the forest, live stock, salted provisions, potash, and some articles of manufactures, are the principal domestic exports. To these is to be added, the merchandize brought from other parts of the Union, and from foreign countries. The trade of the United States with Asia, which now employs 30,000 tons of shipping, is principally, perhaps three quarters of it, carried on by merchants of this section. The vessels engaged in this commerce, sail almost wholly in ballast, taking specie to purchase their return cargoes.

This rich trade, which has prodigiously increased of late years, is prosecuted here with great activity and advantage. The vessels employed in it are generally of a moderate or small size, between two and five hundred tons; they are fitted out with every requisite for a speedy passage, and safe transport of their cargoes, but with nothing for ostentation. It is therefore carried on so much more economically, that the foreign carrier cannot enter into competition with it in any free market, and even the merchants in other parts of the United States, have found it less profitable than it is here. So many young men have commenced their career, by going out as supercargoes; so many able navigators, frequently also employed in making the investments of the cargo, have prosecuted this trade, that it is now better understood in the eastern states, than in any part of the world. Not only the direct trade

with Hindostan and China, but the trade between all the islands and countries of the Indian ocean, they thoroughly understand ; and besides our own country, a considerable portion of Europe is supplied by these enterprising merchants with the coffee and spices of the islands, the sugar and cotton, raw and manufactured of the Indian peninsula, and the silks, teas, and nankins of China.

The commercial cities of the United States may be divided into two classes ; the first contains those which, situated on rivers at a distance from the coast, are the depots for the sale of the domestic produce of the district, which resorts to them for a market, and also for the supply of the same country, with the foreign merchandise they consume. The second class consists of those cities which, in addition to these branches of trade, are, from their proximity to the ocean, convenient marts for general commerce, where every species of merchandise is placed in depot for subsequent distribution. In the first class will be found New-Orleans, Savannah, Alexandria, Baltimore, and Philadelphia ; in the second, some place on the Gulf of Mexico, Charleston, Norfolk, New-York, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, and Portland, may be named. The fate of some of our cities seems yet undecided. The natural course of events will lessen the number that will be great depots. The small places are drawn into the vortex of the larger ones. This process has been produced by Philadelphia, New-York, and Boston.

It seems probable that some place on the Gulf of Mexico, east of the Mississippi, must become an immense mart of commerce, not only for the countries bordering on that Gulf and the West India islands ; but as a seaport for New-Orleans, and through the latter, for the vast commerce that will be borne on the Mississippi. Charleston and Norfolk labour under disadvantages of climate and population, that will prevent them from becoming general depots for the Atlantic states. New-York is daily developing a prodigious growth, which its position, both with regard to internal and external commerce, is calculated to give it. Salem transacts almost all its business on the Exchange of Boston. Portsmouth and Portland are too confined places in their interior trade, to flourish largely from that ; and with regard to foreign commerce. are less advantageously placed than Boston, towards which they must naturally gravitate.

The two principal depots of commerce on our Atlantic coast, will be New-York and Boston. On the great resources and advantages of the former it is not necessary to remark ; the latter only comes within my limits. That Boston must always be a considerable place of commerce, and go on to increase with a steady and certain growth for a long period to come, seems evident from the following circumstances : It is the natural centre of a district, whose population at present exceeds a million and a half, which is gradually increasing. This population is thriving and industrious ; Maine, and the

provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which lie in front of it, and will always have an active trade with it, are in a state of progressive improvement, that is yet susceptible of very wide extension ; it is the centre of the great nursery of seamen, and of the business of ship-building. It is the chief market for all the various products of the fisheries, and of salted provisions ; its harbour is safe, commodious, and connected immediately with the sea ; it is the place of export for many valuable manufactures, long and solidly established ; it is in possession of a very large monied capital. From this last advantage, and from much experience and knowledge of the trade with Asia, the largest portion of that trade, as has been before remarked, is carried on from this place or its vicinity. This latter circumstance may not be so permanent as some of the others, but there seems no reason to doubt of its being long retained.

A good deal of experience has been acquired here on the subject of banking ; and as it was not obtained gratuitously, its practical utility is greater, and the impression will not be easily obliterated. This is a great benefit, as mercantile transactions are conducted on a solid foundation, and more confidence is felt in their stability. On this subject, perhaps, more than any other, it is true that “the follies of the fathers are lost upon the children ; each generation must have its own.” Even our neighbours, who have seen the mischiefs we had suffered, have gone still further lengths into the same extravagan-

ces, and are now feeling even greater evils. The banks in Massachusetts are under good regulations; they are obliged to make semi-annual returns to the legislature of the state of their debts, credits, bills in circulation, and specie in their vaults. Most of the country banks in this and the neighbouring states, are connected with the money market of Boston. The effect is nearly the same, though the action is different, with what takes place between the country banks in England and the London bankers. Many of the banks in this district, which are most active in the employment of their capital, keep a deposit with some of the Boston banks, where their bills can be redeemed at a fixed, small discount: this discount depends on the distance, and varies from $\frac{1}{8}$ to 1 per cent. or about the cost of time and travel to go to the banks themselves. The consequence is, that these bills circulate freely, so long as their issues are proportioned to their capital; any excess is immediately checked, and if not corrected, the bank soon loses its credit, and is of course restricted. It follows, that there is little unreasonable prejudice against banks, and no ignorant admission of any peculiar privileges for making money to a corporation; nor blind submission to their issuing what quantities of bills they please, and refusing to redeem them; though they may, at the same time, be vaunting a dividend of eight, twelve, or twenty per centum, annually.

The essays we see in the papers of the southern and middle states, in which the most egregious er-

rors are frequently promulgated in the most virulent and inflammatory language ; show how slow is the progress of truth, and how inveterate and absurd prejudice may become, when pecuniary interests are engaged in blinding the reason and exciting the passions. From some things which are advanced by the writers and speakers of the day, it would seem as if they had never heard or read of any thing, that has taken place in banking affairs, either in England or in their own country ; though there is hardly any question which can arise, that has not been discussed ; and however uncertain some of the subordinate points may be, the fundamental principle, that all corporate or individual bankers should be held to pay their notes on demand, in the national medium, whether that be paper, silver, or gold, is fully acknowledged and maintained. People who know nothing of the first principles of finance, and there are too many such concerned in banking affairs, have an idea that a bank is to create wealth where none exists ;—it certainly will change the holders of it, if the mere signatures of clerks are to pass as the representative of property.

I knew a member of the Massachusetts legislature, who was very anxious to get a bank in his town, and the principal reason he urged was, that considerable sums of money passed *through* it.—He had an idea, that by having a bank, they should catch these dollars, just as they did the salmon with a seine. Another member of the same legislature,

several years since, who came from a town on the extremity of Cape Cod, asked for a bank for his place, for which he gave the following reasons:— “That they were so poor, that a bank ought to be granted to them; that the legislature had granted banks in the rich counties of Hampshire and Worcester, where the land was very productive, and the inhabitants so rich, that they could do without them; but that in his part of the country there was nothing but sand; that the land produced nothing, and that they were entitled to a bank; and that his constituents would be very much dissatisfied, if an act of incorporation was not granted to them.” The worthy member kept out of sight, the only argument that would have availed any thing—the riches which his constituents drew from a bank that never failed them, and which injured no one—the grand bank of Newfoundland, which would have made a bank a matter of convenience, where there was capital enough to found it upon and to employ it; but he seriously cited their poverty, as an argument that should entitle them to a bank, from feelings of commiseration on the part of the legislature. Incredible as this may seem, it actually occurred, and in some of the states a similar notion prevails, that a bank is to create wealth like a mine; and that the indefinite multiplication of engraved pieces of paper, as the representative of property, is an actual increase of that property, though in reality it diminishes its value. Much embarrassment and loss will arise to the community, where these principles of banking

are yet in process ; but after a time they will acquire wisdom from suffering, and these baseless speculations will be exploded.

The following extract from Governor Pownal's work on the colonies, furnishes a good specimen of generalizing, and I introduce it as a text for a few remarks of a general nature, on the subject of this letter.

“ In the first uncultivated ages of Europe, when men sought nothing but to possess, and to secure possession, the power of the *sword* was the predominant spirit of the world ; it was that which formed the Roman empire ; and it was the same which, in the declension of that empire, divided it again into the several governments formed upon the ruins of it.

“ When men afterward, from leisure, began to exercise the power of their minds in (what is called) learning, religion, the only learning of that time, led them to a concern for their spiritual interests, and consequently led them under their spiritual guides. The power of *religion* would hence as naturally predominate and rule, and did actually become the ruling spirit of the policy of Europe. It was this spirit which for many ages formed and gave away kingdoms ; this which created the anointed lords over them, or again excommunicated and execrated these sovereigns ; this, that united and allied the various nations, or plunged them into war and bloodshed ; this, that formed the balance of the power of the whole, and actuated the second grand scene of Europe's history.

“But since the people of Europe have formed their communication with the commerce of Asia, —have been for some ages past settling on all sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and in America have been possessing every seat and channel of commerce, and have planted and raised that to an interest which has taken root;—since they now feel the powers derived from this, and are extending it to and combining it with others, the spirit of *commerce* will become that predominant power, which will form the general policy and rule the powers of Europe; and hence a grand commercial interest, the basis of a great commercial dominion under the present state and circumstances of the world, will be formed and arise. The rise and forming of this commercial interest, is what constitutes precisely the present crisis.”

The author's general description is correct; *the sword, religion, and commerce*, have been the ruling principles of the three periods, in which the fabled succession of the golden, silver, and iron ages, has been reversed in our favour. Governor Pownall wrote the work which has been cited sixty years ago, and every year since has developed more and more, the prevalence of commerce and its beneficent consequences. It is indeed true that tedious and wasting wars have defaced this period, and impeded, though they could not arrest, the progress of general prosperity. Fearful approaches were recently made by one nation, towards renewing the blasting rule of the sword; but the utter

discomfiture of that power will operate against a repetition of the attempt, which can never again be made under so favourable circumstances, for even a chance of success.

The motives to aid the extension of the commercial spirit, understood in its widest sense, are sufficiently strong to give them a decisive influence in the views of ambition and power; if they seek only their own gratification and enlargement, and not the degradation, as well as the command, of mankind. Take for instance the most prominent objects of Roman grandeur, their public works; their roads, aqueducts, temples, theatres, and palaces, were magnificent; but they have been equalled or surpassed in modern times. If canals be added to roads, as they should be in the calculation, they will stand higher on the scale than even the celebrated *ways* of the Roman. Aqueducts we do not show, because a better knowledge of hydraulics has superseded them. In temples, they cannot compare with ours in size, or architectural science, though they may in beautiful and chaste designs, which were perfected by the Greeks. Their theatres were more vast and imposing, and the use they made of them was more barbarous and ignoble; in palaces they perhaps exceeded the splendour, yet were inferior in accommodation to modern edifices. But what was the state of the people at the different periods? Under the Roman empire, with the exception of a very small number, the entire population were soldiers or labourers; a single dress of wool-

len constituted their whole wardrobe ; their dwellings were mere niches, and nearly all their pleasures, baths, theatres and gymnasia, were public, eleemosynary favours. In modern times, while all these grand monuments have been created, a constant accumulation of comfort has been going on ; society has been improved and divided by imperceptible gradations into numerous classes, of which the meanest was equal to what constituted the mass of ancient population. Even for the purposes of conquest, the commercial system has been the most efficient, and has furnished the means of obtaining possessions, which the Roman legions never could have reached. Commerce not only increases the power of the government, but at the same time advances the improvement of the people. I may recall to your mind on this topic a fine remark of Gibbon : after describing the luxury and ostentation of some of the Roman patricians, he says ; “ Yet the multiplication of glass and linen gives a “ modern private gentleman more real comforts and “ luxury, than a Roman proconsul could enjoy with “ the plunder of a province.”

If it be true, that the age of the sword was less conducive, not only to the happiness of mankind, but even to its own purposes, than the age of commerce ; it is equally and more strikingly evident, that the age of religion continued the calamities of mankind, by the incessant wars it engendered ; and would inevitably have destroyed its pretended object altogether, if the enormity of its abuses had not

produced the Reformation, and laid the way for its subversion. It cannot be necessary to say, that you will understand the author's meaning and mine in the use of this term, religion. The feelings of real religion produced the second era of which he speaks, but the foul adulterous spirit of despotism soon usurped its place, and wearing its mask, made Europe for centuries one wide scene of oppression, misery and devastation. Pure religion withered away, and a hideous superstition grew up in its place, which engendered innumerable abuses, though it sometimes stayed the career of profligate hypocrisy, and compensated for some of its mischiefs, by occasionally obstructing the cause of those who made use of its agency. That union of the priest and magistrate, of politics and religion, was then effected, by which the latter became subservient to the former, and entailed upon mankind an overwhelming burden of abuse. The evils arising from this cause are slowly removed; they are still felt in every nation of Europe, and the deep root they have taken makes it almost impossible to eradicate them. Perfect toleration is the only specific, and this is so obstinately opposed, that an entire cure will be a distant event, although partial remedies have mitigated the disorder. We are fortunately wholly emancipated, and the advantageous consequences are shown, not only in our religious condition, but in the freedom and simplicity of action in our political movements.

How much more efficient is the influence of commerce for the advancement of religion, than the supremacy of religion itself? What advantages did religion derive from the actions or preaching of Peter the Hermit, and the whole host of crusaders? Has not the founding of a single commercial colony, done more for the establishment and diffusion of religious truth, than all the hosts which, in the "age of religion," Europe precipitated on Asia? Does not the intercourse of commerce, by making men and languages known to each other, cause the light of truth to shine wherever commerce has penetrated? And have we not reason to think, that the modern Bible Societies, aided by the facilities which commercial intercourse procures, will do more for the cause of truth, without any violence or any oppression, in one century, than were effected in ten, by all the colleges of the Propagandists?

I am here attaching to the terms, commerce, and the commercial spirit, a very extensive meaning; I consider them as having a bearing on every class of society. In fact, it is not the professed merchant and trader only, who are in our times connected with commerce; the commercial spirit is universal, and pervades all classes in a degree. The modern state of the world is wholly different from the ancient in this respect, and is becoming more so; it is this difference which constitutes our superiority: it is this which affects the cultivator of the earth, the artizan, and all those likewise, whose operations are connected with mental labour: it is

this, which has stimulated the latent powers of production, and fertilized the wide fields of human exertion. It is this activity of the principle of commerce, that is alternately the cause and effect of our liberty, enterprise, science, and morality: it is this therefore, which has made known the rights, enlarged the capacity, multiplied the comforts, and ameliorated the condition of mankind.

In the time of the ancients, those nations which dwelt under inhospitable skies, were very little superior in any thing they possessed, to our Choctaws and Seminoles; and those who lived in more fortunate climates, displayed their grandeur and power principally in war. The people at large must have been poorer, as ignorant, and with as little motive for exertion as the Turks. One ship like those engaged in the trade between Europe and India, would have transported all the merchandise, with the exceptions of corn, wine, and oil, that came annually for the supply of even imperial Rome. Property existed in much fewer shapes; land, palaces, plate, pictures, statues, and slaves, were the chief investments of it; this wealth was commonly the spoils of a vanquished enemy, and held by a few patrician families; the people at large had no motive to labour, except for daily sustenance; there were few gradations, to produce the constant excitement of rivalry and effort to better their situation; the disparity was too great to give any hope of attaining that vast wealth, which was in the hands of a few, and of whose ostentatious gratuities they were content to partake, in frequent-

ing the baths or the theatres. If *Panis et circenses* was the popular cry in the decline of the empire, it was bread alone, in poorer and more virtuous times.

Till the conclusion of the 15th century, things were but little better ; in modern times the baron, the priest and the peasant, comprised almost all the distinctions in society. The latter received just enough of the produce of his labour to keep him from starving, and the surplus was divided between the two former. A comparatively small number of mechanics were sufficient to make the few rude articles of dress and furniture then in use. The monied transactions that occurred were in the hands of Jews, who were held in such contempt and oppression, that their agency could be neither extensive or honourable. The few shops then seen, must have made such a paltry display of wares, as is now exhibited in the poorest suburbs of modern cities. A pedlar was the richest dealer in a district, and he supplied, in his rambling visits, not only the cottage of the serf, but the castle of the master. Canals were unknown and roads impassable ; transportation of commodities was almost impracticable ; the exchange of products was therefore but little practised ; the corn, wine, oil, and wool that were produced in a province, were consumed within it, excepting some of the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean, on which sea were to be found almost all the vessels that carried on the commerce of Europe.

I have here recalled to your mind the circumstances of former times in this general outline, only to show the contrast with the present, and thus infer the superiority of the influence of commerce over the other two ruling principles. With the added success of several centuries of conquest, what did the power of the sword produce, but the colossal grandeur of the eternal city, and the slavery of every country in Europe? With the unlimited devotion of men's minds, with a universal fanaticism, and a trembling unconditional submission to its decrees, what did the domination of religion, in the exercise of political power, produce in the course of ten centuries, but some gigantic churches, some vast convents, a few illuminated MSS. and universal ignorance and superstition? What has been effected by the influence of commerce in a little more than three centuries? let the prosperity of the civilized world, and the daily extension of its limits, be the answer.

The pervading, powerful agency of the commercial principle, is a subject of admiration, and the era of its rule seems destined to carry society to its highest capability of improvement, and perhaps to furnish the preventives of national decay. It acts as the universal stimulus to production, and makes what is produced the certain means of acquiring wealth: the acquisition of this induces and sustains every other acquisition, liberty, comfort, instruction, morality, and religion. Every individual in society is animated by this influence, as every thing

he can produce is marketable : men do not limit themselves to the mere attainment of sustenance ; whatever may be their pursuit, each strives to create a surplus by his labour beyond his own immediate wants, to secure a greater power of ulterior gratification. This impulse extends the limits of intercourse every year, multiplies the mass of exchangeable products, and of course accumulates the general amount of property, or the results of human industry : it equalizes the gifts of Providence, and levels the condition of his creatures ; by it, distant nations are brought into communication, and each is enabled to profit not only by the barter of commodities, but by the observation of every kind of improvement. A new fruit is obtained from one, a machine from another, a wise regulation from a third. Climate no longer prevents this man from eating sugar, or deprives that of bread. The vast capabilities of the earth are thrown into one common stock, which is open to universal competition, and from which intelligence and industry are sure to derive the largest portion.

The absurdity, on reflection, must be apparent, though it still occurs occasionally, of talking about a commercial interest separate from that of the community, in any extensive nation ; and the attempt to inspire a jealousy of it is unwise and mischievous. The merchants, for instance, in the United States, numerous and important as their operations have become, are only the factors for the rest of the nation. Their interests cannot be

different on any great points. Their concerns and those of the agriculturist are intimately blended. We have learnt, from severe experience, that restrictions on them almost immediately affect the whole country. It is like throwing a dam across the mouth of a river ; the current is first checked there, but the flood recedes till it stagnates in its most distant fountains. The planter, farmer, mechanic, and very soon the professional man, are affected injuriously by any hindrance to free trade. The commercial action is to the nation what the circulation of the blood is to the body ; it carries vitality and nutriment to every part.

Europe still suffers under the prevalence of maxims, established in times of comparative ignorance and barbarity. The restrictions in the commerce of grain, in the exportation of specie, and in other articles of merchandise, are obstacles to public prosperity. Some of these questions are attended with such serious consequences ; the minority which gains by monopoly, always pertinacious, however small, throw so many alarms in the way of an improved system, that the advances towards it are slow. Then the rivalries and animosities between different states, the embarrassments caused by their colonial system, and the enormous exactions of the fisc, render amelioration hopeless ; so long as the warlike establishments of those countries shall consume so large a part of their substance, and intimidate their statesmen from trying alterations, which may throw any hazard on the means of supporting

them. How fortunate is our condition in this respect; without colonies to restrict or to favour, without military establishments beyond the first wants of defence; with every part of our territory on an equal footing, all its productions freely exported, and no foreign ones prohibited, the freedom of commerce is here perfect and its benefits incalculable.

The state of commerce, as it now exists in the world, has rendered many prejudices, originally just, and long hereditary, now obsolete. When the merchants of the world were in proportion to its commerce, and little more than a group of pedlars and usurers, it was allowable to view them with contempt or hatred. But when their operations have extended, till a single individual employs more persons, and receives a greater income, than some princes, the case is altered. We have lately seen; that one of them might almost be considered a party at the Congress of Aix la Chapelle; without whose agency, at least, the sovereigns could not have terminated their arrangements. Mercantile transactions, by the extension of commerce, are widely diffused; and every man who has any thing beyond his own wants, is obliged to partake of them. The agriculturist who employs any capital, must be extensively engaged in buying and selling; and he must be conversant with many commercial transactions, and keep in view the general state of commerce, or he will be a great loser. There are; besides, a large number of individuals, who as

bankers, insurers, stockholders, or adventurers in different voyages, employ their capital in trade, though in a manner that leaves them great leisure for amusements or instruction. It is these numerous classes of individuals, with characters more or less elevated, that connect the profession of commerce with the leading ranks of society. Education in a free country is the chief test of respectability; and as the sons of merchants receive the same education with those of princes, and often profit by it more, it is the fault or the choice of the individual, if his station be not conspicuous.

The results of enlarged commerce have been so numerous and important; the changes it has made in society have been so beneficent, that I do not know whether it be too extravagant to hope, that posterity may owe a diminution of war to this source. As people acquire property, instruction, a feeling of their rights, and the habit of examining public affairs and judging questions of general interest, they may hereafter become too wise, to suffer kings to play so often at the game of war. That the practice of war should be foregone altogether, we cannot expect or wish. With all its evils, it produces some good effects. It may be the corruption of our nature if you please, but it seems natural to man. It brings out some of his virtues, and sustains the high and noble feeling, which makes personal safety a subordinate consideration. It gives frequent examples of manliness, magnanimity, and the sacrifice of selfishness on the altar of patriotism.

It abashes and humiliates that tone of cant and hypocrisy, which avarice and cowardice sometimes assume, to screen their meanness under the disguise of philanthropy and religion. It, besides, employs a number of people, who from their peculiar character would be only nuisances in society; and if they had no other resort, would become private bullies and assassins; though the same people under military discipline, guided by superior minds and excited by a certain standard of honour, may make excellent "food for powder," and contribute to the defence of their country. But if the increase of intelligence and personal independence, which are produced by the extension of commerce; if this should stimulate the citizens of every country in Europe, to insist on a reduction of the oppressive and useless military establishments, which devour so much of their industry; if they would endure only a small army for the personal gratification of the sovereign, and the necessary defence of the country, against the surprise of sudden invasion, and thus diminish the scale of military achievements, to a kind of pompous gladiatorial combats, we might then hope for that splendid era which would deprive war of its sting, and confirm the prosperity and improvements of mankind. This era, you may think, would be too near an approach to the millennium, to be expected in our age. When all civilized nations in a feeling of universal comity, and enlarged views of individual as well as general interests, should agree in removing the restrictions from commerce,

that mutually oppress them, and should insist that the operations of war should not interfere, except in the case of a besieged fortress, with the subsistence of mankind, or the rewards of their industry; that inoffensive productions should circulate freely, and be exempt from capture; then would war be a comparatively harmless struggle, in which the minions of glory would be the only sufferers; when its destruction would be confined to a single plain, or a solitary fortress; and not, as we now behold it, plundering the palace and the cottage, devastating provinces, covering kingdoms with ruin; by its insatiable demands, consuming the blood and substance of nations, involving the victor and the vanquished in one common oppression, ruining the latter by its defeats, and enfeebling the former by its triumphs.

LETTER V.

LITERATURE.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE past and present state of American literature, and the hopes which may be entertained in respect to it, you know have of late years been frequently discussed by those who felt an interest in the

subject. The circumstances which have influenced it hitherto, and those which can be expected to promote it hereafter, have been dwelt upon by many patriotic minds, who were anxious about the real and lasting glory of their country. So many just and acute disquisitions have been made, that there is little chance of saying any thing new; but to fulfil my intentions and promises, when we last conversed on the subject, I must attempt to give you some account of the literary condition and prospects of this section of the Union, without attempting to go out of these limits.

The first colonists of Massachusetts and Connecticut, from which the other eastern states derive their origin and general character, were some of them men of learning, who were led to expatriate themselves, with the purpose of promoting education and enjoying their religious opinions undisturbed; the latter, indeed, was by far the strongest and most vehement motive, yet they considered the former its most essential support. They founded a college, therefore, to prepare aliment for the mind, before their cultivation of the soil was sufficiently extended, to guarantee them against a famine for the body. A generation had hardly elapsed, from the first landing of the forefathers, before they were followed by many learned and pious men, who fled from persecution so much more eagerly, when they came to a colony, where not only their religious opinions could be enjoyed, but where their learning obtained for them the highest reverence and distinction. The

scattered settlements along the shores of Massachusetts and Connecticut, which on the map of our now extensive empire can hardly be made visible, were not inhabited, as is often the case in a new colony, by men of forlorn prospects and ruined characters, or by desperate, expelled outcasts; but by gentlemen and yeomen of England, who, in a period of stern religious dissent, went into a voluntary, distant exile, to preserve what they considered the truth. These solitary villages, hardly indenting the vast forest that overshadowed the continent, where labour and frugality never relaxed their cares; where every thing luxurious withered before the energy of body and mind, maintained by the daily encounter of hardship and danger; in these lone villages, there were to be found as teachers and leaders of the flock, men who united all the learning of the schools, to the piety and zeal of the confessors and martyrs. These men, who had been bred in the antique cloisters of Oxford and Cambridge, with habits and views that ordinarily lead to timid apprehensions of every thing new, and a reluctant change of locality; cheerfully came to what was then called the new, and might almost be considered another, world,—and here exhorted their fellow pilgrims to constancy. Sometimes their discourse was held in the deep shades of moss-grown forests, whose gloom and interlaced boughs first suggested that Gothic architecture, beneath whose pointed arches, where they had studied and prayed, the parti-coloured windows shed a tinged light; scenes which the gleams of sunshine,

penetrating the deep foliage, and flickering on the variegated turf below, might have recalled to their memory.

A text selected by a distinguished clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Danforth, for a sermon preached on a public occasion, in the early period of the Colony, was strikingly adapted to his purpose, and might nearly be taken as a standing motto for the history of our forefathers—“ *What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken by the wind?*

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft clothing are in King's houses.

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

They were constantly reading the scriptures and citing particular passages, which they thought applicable to their situation. From this source they acquired much of the fortitude which made them endure, and finally triumph over the hardships of their lot.

Though religion was the chief, nay, almost the exclusive motive for the cultivation of learning by our ancestors, they were not wholly neglectful of the natural sciences, which have since that period been so prodigiously developed. It is a singular fact, that the first founders of the Royal Society of England meditated the romantic idea of coming to this country, to devote themselves wholly to the pursuit of science. This singular conception was abandoned, but one or two of them came here, and were in constant correspondence with the Society

at home. But to rear teachers of the gospel, was the main purpose for which the first colleges were founded. The ancient languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, divinity, logic, and philosophy, such as they were in that period, were the only objects of study.

Having so early founded a college for teaching some of the higher branches of learning, it may be supposed that they did not overlook the utility of widely diffusing the advantages of the common kinds of instruction. This was attended to from the beginning; laws were enacted from time to time, until it became the imperative duty of every town to maintain a public school; and at present these must be so supported, as to give every child the means of instruction. In Connecticut the expense is defrayed by a fund belonging to the state, amounting to 1,500,000 dollars, the income of which is paid over to each town in certain relative proportions. In the other eastern states, it is done by each town taxing itself to keep open a school for a part of the year, generally during the winter months. In these schools, reading, writing, and arithmetic are taught, and every family has a right to send its children. The consequence is, that the rudiments of education are more universally disseminated, than over any district of equal extent in the world; and but few instances can be found in this population, verging towards two millions, of native individuals who cannot read and write. Next to these common schools, come the grammar schools, which are

maintained in the more populous towns, and the scale of tuition in these is higher. Then come the incorporated schools, called academies, of which there are thirty or forty in Massachusetts, and a considerable number in the other states; these are supported partly by funds, and by a moderate sum paid for tuition. Writing, arithmetic, geography, elocution, and the languages, are taught in most of them sufficiently for the examination on entering college. Each state has one or more colleges—Connecticut one, Rhode Island two, New Hampshire one, Vermont two, Maine one, and Massachusetts three, including the Andover Theological College. The foundation at Cambridge, which dates from 1639, is the only one that is, perhaps, strictly entitled to the appellation of University. The college at New-Haven, founded in 1704, is the next in point of reputation, as well as age. New Hampshire and Rhode Island come next. The college at Brunswick, in Maine, is in a growing state, and though of recent date, enjoys, considerable reputation.*

Through these different schools, the whole rising generation is at least taught to read and write. The higher class of seminaries produce annually a large number who have acquired something of the languages, geography, &c. besides those who are bred in many respectable private schools, where the tuition is commonly more effective, as the pupils are

* Bowdoin College at Brunswick is increasing rapidly. The students have doubled in number within four years; and owing to the zeal of its government, the ability of the instructors, and the spirit of improvement prevailing there, it may be ranked as the third college in the Union.

fewer in number and the expense greater. Last come the colleges and the university, which perhaps confer degrees, one year with another, on about three hundred young men, without including those belonging to other states. These have, in their four years residence, pursued the languages, the belles lettres, history, natural and moral philosophy, the mathematics, and heard lectures on theology, law, chemistry, botany, and the medical branches of science, which last, however, are optional. Some of the colleges are deficient in a part of these branches, and some of them are filled by a more able professor in one institution than at another. The use of lectures as a means of teaching is increasing in our establishments; in certain departments we may boast as valuable courses of lectures, and as able professors, as can be found in any country.

The ability to read must then be universal; the manner in which it is exercised, of course varies with the situation, instruction and tastes of the individual. The Bible is the most read of all other books; it would certainly be difficult to find a house without one. Next to this, in the houses of the poorer classes will be found popular religious tracts, of which great numbers, as well as of the Bible, are now annually distributed, gratis. Next to these in frequency are volumes of popular poetry, travels, or contemporaneous works, exciting patriotic feelings, or the political sympathies of the times. Then come the favourite novelists and poets of the day,

Byron, Scott, Miss Edgeworth, &c. whose works, republished in a cheap, small form, are spread every where. Lastly, come a few with a literary or scientific taste, who possess the standard works in modern literature, the ancient classics, and splendid works in the sciences. Such libraries are not very numerous,—still less can they be called extensive, when compared with the private collections in some countries of Europe; but there are some respectable both for size and selection, and the taste for owning really valuable works is increasing. I do not know of any private library among us containing more than seven thousand volumes, but there are many that exceed one or two thousand.

We have been, and still are, much more in the habit of reading books, than making them; yet the number we have produced is greater, than most persons would suppose, or than might have been expected under our circumstances. The earliest efforts were some small descriptive works, printed in England, written soon after the first settlement of the country, and which are by no means deficient in interest, to those who are fond of investigating our early history. Next come sermons, religious controversy, and metaphysical religion, spread into bewildering subtleties, or abstruse, incomprehensible doctrines,—sad trash, of which hardly a single volume has now any value. This class of books has always, and does still, form the largest in our productions; but its relative magnitude is daily lessening, and its merit increasing. Polemical religion is not

much to the taste of the day ; and a religious disputant can gain but few readers, and still fewer admirers. If a man is affected with this mania, the best cure for him, without taking the thousands of folios that crowd some of the theological libraries of Europe, would be to show him the collection of what has been done here ; how little the cause of truth has been served by this kind of strife, and how worthless are all these dingy volumes. Some of our public libraries, in order to make their collection complete, have copies of them all, which are no where else to be found ; for most of these works, like the Vicar of Wakefield's Treatise on Monogamy, became scarce even in the life-time of their authors. But the same improvement has taken place in this, as in other branches of our literature. We have had some sermons published within a few years, that will be always read with pleasure.

The next class in point of number, and the first in value, have been journals, histories, and biography ;—with the aid of these, we have a very complete chronology from the earliest settlement of the country, and a tolerable account of the principal individuals who are connected with our history. The constant Indian wars, and the hostilities with the French, form the themes of many narratives. Biography of the governors, of men who distinguished themselves in the border wars, of clergymen who were remarkable for their learning or influence, are the chief subjects. Most of these works we owe to clergymen, who were for some

generations the only professional men possessed of respectability and talents. It is only during the two last generations that physicians and lawyers have been men of learning and celebrity. Next come poetry and miscellaneous works in the belles-lettres; religion or politics have been the prevailing motives of the former. Connecticut has been the principal nursery of this species of talent. Many of these productions are respectable, and certainly as worthy of preservation as the works of several of the minor poets, who are enrolled in English collections of poetry. But none of it is of the first class, and therefore a very lasting reputation cannot be founded upon it; for mediocrity in poetry is like staleness in champagne; and we have it on very ancient and very decisive authority, that neither gods nor men will tolerate indifferent poetry. Still, I believe the productions of some of these writers, will form part of future collections of American poetry,—partly as early specimens, partly, because there was a good deal of patriotic and ardent feeling in the writers, that made them very popular at the time,—and because, if not very brilliant, the versification was flowing and correct.

I have not noticed political writings, but these have been very abundant. The Revolution, the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and the parties that grew up under it, have furnished innumerable pamphlets, and some solid volumes. By far the greater number of these were ephemeral, and can now only be met with on the shelves of

collectors: they were too often written with all the bitterness and prejudice of party spirit, and were forgotten with the temporary purpose they were meant to answer. But there are some honourable exceptions, and this period has furnished some treatises, that will enter into the studies of all future statesmen. The Defence of the American Constitutions, and the Federalist, will certainly be of this description.

A great many magazines have been undertaken within the last half century, which existed only for a few years. At present they are numerous, particularly religious ones: the Calvinists, Unitarians, Baptists, Methodists, Universalists, Swedenborgians, Episcopalians, have each one for the particular edification of their own sect. A quarterly journal devoted to the sciences, published at New-Haven, is highly deserving of an extended patronage, both for its objects and the talents of its editor. The New-England Medical Journal, appearing quarterly, at Boston, has able contributors: an Agricultural Journal is issued by the Massachusetts Agricultural Society, the Athenaeum, printed once a fortnight, is composed exclusively of selections from the English Magazines, and as it takes the cream from them all must be a rich miscellany. The North American Review published quarterly is devoted to general literature and science. This work is now conducted with very great ability. It is republished in England, and since it has come under the direction of the present editor promises

to be the most widely circulated of all our periodical works, of which it is certainly the most distinguished.

I have omitted, in the account of our reading, to mention newspapers:—these are so numerous, so cheap and so miscellaneous, that they are dispersed every where. Upwards of a dozen are published in Boston, two in Salem, Portsmouth, Portland, Hallowell, Providence, Hartford, New-Haven, &c.—and almost every county has one. They carry their various topics into every dwelling; each political party has its own, and whatever taste becomes considerably spread, soon has a printer to purvey for it. Thus, there is one of these papers that espouses the cause of masonry, another that gives an account of religious missions, revivals, &c. Every body reads newspapers;—the market-man, riding home in his cart, will be often seen poring over their pages;—they are found, not only in every inn, as in England, but in almost every farmer's house. All read; all get a smattering of the events as they pass,—and many acquire an idle, desultory habit, from going over the strange medley of these endless gazettes, that incapacitates them from pursuing a steady and solid course of reading.

The discouragements to which our literature is exposed, have been well pointed out;—I will touch for a moment on a few of them. The greatest, and the most obvious was the constant, supply of very superior articles, to use the language of trade, from England. In this, as in coarser branches of manu-

facture, it was almost in vain to enter into competition. Her scholars were already made, and supplied with every advantage for their labours. Her literary capital was great; her taste and learning long matured, and in every thing of a finer texture, she could furnish us better and cheaper than we did ourselves. Still, every people must have something peculiar in their situation, and learn to prepare for themselves what this peculiarity renders necessary, and also such things, the want of which is constantly occurring. We soon ceased to import horse-shoes and almanacs. As one of the earliest manufactures we possessed was that of thread-lace, so one of the first productions of our literature was poetry. This particularly flourished about the time we became a nation. As we could not expect our enemies to prepare patriotic verses for us, we were obliged to make them for ourselves. In this fervid era, enthusiasm naturally led to the production of poetry, and more considerable works were undertaken under that excitement, than we have produced since. In the mean time, skill and capital, to continue this borrowed phraseology, have both been accumulating, and there are some branches where the wants of the country are now in a great degree, and soon will be entirely, supplied at home. Such, for instance, as law, medicine, theology, politics, domestic biography, and history. Several of the sciences are beginning to show specimens of our acquirements, which are both elegant and pro-

found, and the prospect of a rapid growth of our literary reputation is extremely animating.

Besides the discouragement to labour in the field of literature here, produced by the great superiority of those who cultivated it in England, and whose works, from being in the same language, were equally accessible to us as to them; another disadvantage arose from the want of wealth and leisure, or in other words, from the necessity and benefit of devoting all our faculties to more material pursuits. The forests were to be prostrated, the land tilled, the sea navigated. There was little superfluous wealth amassed; almost every man's existence depended upon his labour, and those who were exempt from this necessity, were obliged to devote themselves to the various cares of regulating and administering the concerns of society; for which employment honour was the chief recompense, as their fellow citizens could not, or would not pay those who served them. Thus, in labouring for his family or the public, every man's exertions were needed, and till a recent period, every thing that was written among us, was produced by magistrates and clergymen, in those gleanings of time which they could make from their professional vocations. Very profound researches, or very finished disquisitions, could not be looked for under these circumstances. The works that were written were for local and temporary purposes, or they were narratives of events, furnishing invaluable documents to future historians.

The scattered position of our population, and the want of large towns, was an obstruction. The urbanity, the atticism, or by whatever name that tone of good taste may be called, which can never harmonize with rusticity or vulgarity, cannot exist unless formed by the concentration of large cities. Without a metropolis, where individual prejudice and conceit will be confounded and put down by the collision of equal or superior minds, there will be always a provincial air discoverable in all works of literature, that will disqualify them for general circulation. They exhibit a sort of dialect of ideas, as well as of words, of which the former is much more intolerable than the latter. In England and France there are works published every year in the provinces that exemplify this defect, and which never get beyond their own vicinity. This state of things, from which we are beginning to emerge, produced its natural effect. We had no large towns, where, out of the congregation of opinions, every defect and every beauty was sure to be remarked, and an author thus enabled to form a correct model. Our seminaries were rather for the instruction of boys than men; there were no more persons employed in them than was necessary for the former purpose; and as there were no matured minds engaged in the higher branches of study, even the limited competency of collegiate society was wanting in the formation of a pure taste. In every department of the belles-letters, particularly those which partake of satire and sportive wit, this would

be most strongly shown. The productions of Connecticut furnish a striking example of this, not only because they were most numerous, but because the influence alluded to was wholly wanting. They exhibited strong, acute, and witty minds, which if they had breathed any other atmosphere than that of a village, might have formed accomplished writers. The people of these states have a strong love and perception of humour, but it is clothed in a rustic dress. The equality of condition carries this style of humour among men of all professions, and the writers in question imbibed its rusticity; often yielding to it against even their better judgment, that their writings might be more easily relished by those immediately about them. The consequence has been, that even genuine wit was degraded by its associations, till it became maukish to a correct taste. Their sweetness resembles more the flavour of that popular commodity, of which we annually drain the West Indies, than the honey of Mount Hymettus. The productions of minds fraught with classic images, were adapted to village comprehension; their Apollo was the god in exile and disguise, tending the flocks of Admetus in Thessaly, playing with the reed of Pan to shepherds and cottagers, not striking the lyre to the listening Muses and Graces on Parnassus.

There is one branch of literature, in which we have produced nothing that will go down to the next generation, though several attempts have been made. I speak of the drama; our failure of success here

is owing to various causes. All the prominent and most natural subjects of tragedy and comedy have long since been brought into action on the French and English stage. Nothing was left to modern writers, but to invent some new and complicated plot, or to seize upon the passing ridicule of the day for the amusement of an audience: even these resources are not inexhaustible, and the English theatre, so far as the authors are concerned, has been gradually deteriorating, till at last legitimate tragedy and comedy have been almost lost, and pantomime, with all its powerful accompaniments of music, dancing and scenery, has nearly got possession of the stage. In this exhaustion of subjects, we of course were equally at a loss, but we had in addition other disadvantages to struggle with. 'Tis less than a generation since we have had a theatre at all, and even now, the Boston theatre is the only regular one in the eastern states. Stage plays were held in abomination by our puritan ancestors; and a repeal of the law against them in the state of Massachusetts, was obtained after a hard struggle, and only as regarded the capital. The first theatre opened here was before the repeal, and the plays were called, "*Moral Lectures*:" thus an advertisement ran; "This evening will be performed a moral lecture, called *The School for Scandal*," &c. The magistrates, with a due discretion and regard to public opinion, winked at this evasion, till just at the close of the season, when they interfered. The repeal took place at the next session of the legislature.

You may recollect the story of the German burgo-master, who told his sovereign on his entering the city, that they did not fire a salute for six reasons; the first was, that they had no cannon; when the prince, good-naturedly, spared him a recital of the remainder. Now you may think it a sufficient excuse, that we have not produced plays, when we were without a theatre; but still the topic suggests some further observations. We are nearly in the position of Ireland and Scotland towards England, as regards the stage. Ireland and Scotland have no drama of their own, though they have marked peculiarities of character, a distinct dialect, and many traditions and romantic adventures appropriate to themselves. Yet they have never recurred to these; they submit to the dictature of the metropolitan stage, from which they derive all their scenic representations, and on which they seldom appear except in an odious or ridiculous character. Macbeth and Douglas are indeed from Scottish history, but they were written for the English stage. In the case of Scotland, this seems remarkable, as their romantic history is not only a favourite theme with them, but with others; and their peculiar dialect, which they are so fond of retaining, and with which all their novels and poetry is infected, would have its value in the drama also. They have, in addition, a national music, which is by all nations admitted to be beautiful; they have a large and splendid metropolis, where a good deal of national pride exists; and it would seem as if no country in Europe could

have more interesting national operas than the Scotch, and yet I do not know that any attempt in this way was ever made by them. Perhaps, the narrow and bigoted spirit of the Presbyterians, like that of our puritans, proscribed the theatre. Now, we are without some of the advantages for the drama possessed by the Scotch, particularly in their music, and we are, like them, without any actors of our own, and depend upon foreign performers. This is better, as far as regards English plays, but it is in vain to expect to introduce our own customs and manners on the stage, until we have a race of native actors who can personate them. In some attempts that have been made, an English actor attempting to personate a Yankee clown, would introduce his Yorkshire or Somersetshire cant, but this no more represented it, than it did an Irishman or a Scotchman. Every country has its particular style of humour and manners, and so has ours, and none but a native can exhibit the marked peculiarity of these. without which all comic zest is destroyed.

In the progress of time we shall doubtless have a national theatre, and then local peculiarities will furnish resources for comedy. There are some periods of our history, which will furnish hereafter highly dramatic subjects. This mine must be worked by posterity ; what will be deeply interesting to them, runs into the absurd with cotemporaries. A few years since, a tragedy was brought forward and played several nights, founded on one of the memorable events of the Revolution ; one of

the principal characters was that of a distinguished officer, who derived much amusement by going to the theatre to see himself represented. The premature blending of fact and fancy together in a drama, will make even the most serious subjects ludicrous. In the calculation of chances, it may be presumed that some of the future attempts will succeed, though to write a good play under the inspiration of either Muse, is one of the most difficult productions of literature. I presume more than a dozen tragedies, comedies, and farces, have been brought forward on the Boston stage since it was established, which have seldom struggled more than a night or two ; a much greater number have been written than have ever been attempted on the stage, though they may have been printed, commonly to the subsequent regret of the author. I knew one of these a few years since that produced a useful effect, though it was not on the stage. A member of a legislative body, like Beaumarchais's physician, had "witten a tragedy in his youth," which was unluckily printed, and was most truly ridiculous. During a period of high party spirit, a printer had obtained a copy, and was preparing to overwhelm the senator with ridicule. A gentleman who was anxious for the enactment of a particular bill, obtained this copy, and gave it to the author, with no other intimation than that of the mischief he had prevented. In what degree of bribery this would be ranked, I know not ; it however at least neutralized a vote.

One of the most serious discouragements to American authors ; one that meets them in the very threshold, arises from the peculiar circumstances of the book trade ; some of these—for instance, the difficulty of transmitting books in small parcels to great distances, which is a serious obstacle, will be gradually obviated, as the means of transportation and communication are daily improving. But the main evil will be of longer continuance ; the publishing booksellers of the United States are the natural enemies of our own authors ; they, whose intervention is a matter of necessity, either refuse it altogether, or offer it with reluctance, and as a favour. I do not know that they can be blamed for consulting their own interest, except it be by the non-descripts, who do not follow the same rule. It is nevertheless a check to the enterprize of literary men, who can now hardly get a book printed unless they will sell it themselves ; and they cannot be authors, except gratuitously, unless they will be booksellers also ; those who are best qualified for the latter occupation, are not always the most competent to the former. The two, however, are frequently united. The publishers in the United States obtain the productions of the English press for nothing ; every book printed in that country is a *waif* to them ; which they greedily take into possession. The author is in this case paid nothing ; the bookseller and printer profit by his wits. An American author must be paid for the oil he has consumed, but the bookseller would not give him the value of the

trimmings of his lamp: Why should he? He can derive more by the republication of foreign literature. The public also connive at this proscription of domestic talent, partly from habit, partly from interest; since if the author receives any thing for his labours, American books must be dearer than foreign ones, on which the publisher modestly takes for his share, as an importer, only part of what would be paid to the author.

We have indeed no poet like Byron, or novelist like Scott and Edgeworth; would to heaven we had! but we might furnish works superior to many that are reprinted here, and circulated with all the industry of trade. Much of what is republished is miserable. But I may cite to you a case which will exemplify the whole of this evil. Some years since a bookseller got the earliest copy of one of those villanous libels, that have been written against this country, in the form of travels; it was a sorry production; yet it was foreign, and therefore printed and circulated. It so happened, that a clergyman of this state, who had recently travelled over the same ground, published a well written tour, which, however, contained nothing libellous;—it would not sell. I recollect seeing in a periodical publication, a short notice from him of these circumstances, expressed in terms rather of regret than anger, and which terminated with this apposite description of American patronage; *Alienos fovens, suis neglectis*. This evil will be slowly corrected by public feeling, and we may look forward to the

time when foreign works of merit only will be reprinted, and when a domestic production of equal goodness will have the preference over a foreign one ; but this period has not yet arrived.

Literature is discouraged by the present state of patronage, which is not commensurate with our means. Patronage formerly meant an arrogant gratuity, bestowed by rank and wealth on the labours of genius, to gratify ostentation or secure fame, by having their names held up in a dedication. But the condition of authors is ameliorated ; a dedication is now a mark of friendship, not of subserviency ; the individual largess is changed into public contribution. The number of readers, from the wide diffusion of education, now contributes the most effective patronage. It is this kind of support which is wanting, not from deficiency of means, but from want of consideration. There is many a person among us whose cellar is worth a thousand dollars, but whose library would not bring a hundred. Do not think for a moment that I would disparage the value of wine, particularly that true Falernian, that is sent to double the Cape of Good Hope. I have read too much of Anacreon and Horace to be guilty of that heresy ; on the contrary, I hold its limited consumption to be one of the ablest supporters of sound learning. But I mean, that we have the ability to encourage learning, by buying books to the full extent which is necessary, to cherish our growing literature. A very few dollars a year would purchase a copy of every American work, and the money so employed

is not thrown away ; even if the purchaser does not read them, they will commonly sell for what they cost. It is a want of reflection on its advantages, that prevents many persons, who have a patriotic feeling for every thing that concerns the honour of their country, from this slight contribution ; which paid by many, amounts to an ample aggregate. Persons who can easily afford the purchase, should feel something like shame at borrowing a book which they may obtain of any bookseller, and thus reward the talents of their countrymen. If the importance of this were fully understood, there are many more individuals than now practise it, who would give directions to their bookseller to send them a copy of every American work of merit, as soon as it appeared. Many scientific and learned men would then be encouraged to pursue labours, which are now too often unrewarded. This topic recalls a remark of a distinguished individual, which will fully illustrate it. Being engaged one day in conversation with three or four gentlemen, they urged him to remain, when he proposed leaving them ; his answer was, that he could not. “ I must go down to Wells and Lilly’s. They have advertised some new and valuable books this morning, and I must buy them for some of my rich parishoners, who will want to borrow them.”

The deference for foreign opinion and the admiration of foreign literature, was disadvantageous when it was carried to excess, since it occasioned, with many, and those commonly the most cultivat-

ed minds, a distrust of their own powers, which rendered them inactive. There was a numerous class of mere smatterers, who were ready to impute their want of success entirely to the dazzling brilliancy of foreign works; people, who believed if the nightingale were out of the way, their own croaking would be music, and who therefore invoked patriotism to support, what good taste condemned. Those who had the cause of sound literature really at heart, who feared the progress of a false, inflated style, and, above all, the deterioration of the language, by the introduction of corrupt idioms and unauthorized words, treated all this class with great derision. Hence a habit of sarcasm and sneering at our own productions became general, and tended to create a distrust of them all. Politics also, which blend themselves so frequently with modern literature, exercised a powerful influence. The learning of the country was almost entirely on the side of that party, which began the administration of the national affairs, and which soon after became the minority. The disappointment created by this political reverse, was too deeply felt. Temporary mischiefs were considered radical evils. The loss of an election was held to be not the consequence of measures, but of the vices of our system. Men with upright views especially, were apt to attribute the vexations and injustice they met with in public life, to false principles of government. Foreigners, who looked at our institutions with incredulity or jealousy, denounced them as impracticable or ab-

surd, because they were unsuited to any thing they were acquainted with. The vile, atrocious parody of our maxims and establishments, by the French Revolution, confirmed them in their opinions; and produced some influence upon us; for if the enormities in France were the natural result of our system, then it was indeed monstrous: and we were so frequently told that the reflection we saw in the Revolutionary mirror was our own image, that much uneasiness was excited, though we could not recognise it. The picture, however, was as much like the original, as in one of those optical tricks, where the figure of the most beautiful object in creation is converted by reflection into a hideous monster.

The political distrust and anxiety that were engendered, had their influence upon literary opinions. Our institutions were so new; they were so beneficent, compared with those of any other nation, that apprehensions were perfectly natural. There was a period even when a man who defended their wisdom and stability, was considered rather visionary, and exposed to a certain vague suspicion of jacobinism. This has gone by; experience has accumulated proofs of their solidity; statesmen have become convinced that the walls are not a wooden frame, but massive masonry, and more and more pride is felt for the edifice. This feeling, in concerns of state, has a reaction upon literature, and we begin to feel more confidence and more ardour in its pursuit. These effects will be evi-

dent to every person who has watched the progress of criticism, and the tone of the higher class of literary journals. A subservience to foreign opinions is destroyed ; they will be examined and valued only for their intrinsic merits, and we may flatter ourselves, that a progressive self-respect will be justified by our productions.

There are several reasons that hold out to our country the fair prospect of literary fame, and a very extensive cultivation of learning. The incitements are very powerful : from the wide spread of our language, the numbers that speak it, on both continents, are already great, but from the vast capacity for increase here, how many additional millions, in only a few years, will communicate their ideas through this medium ! This consideration will be a powerful stimulus to talent and benevolence ; for the good that may be done, or the applause that may be acquired by authors, very much depend on the language that is used. A writer who should publish brilliant or useful thoughts in the Danish or Swedish language, or several others, would write for a very small portion of mankind ; hence many authors in Europe have given up the language of their own country, to write in French, which is more generally known ; but there is a great disadvantage in this, for the number of persons who can acquire a foreign language in sufficient perfection to express their thoughts in it with ease and elegance, must necessarily be very limited. The French having been

used in diplomatic intercourse by common consent, became the language of polite people in every country of Europe, and at one period this gave it a promise of universality. Some disposition has been shown on the continent to narrow its use, in order to counteract a political influence; this may be only temporary; yet the English must become the predominant language. It is probably now spoken more than the French. In Asia it must be the exclusive European language: in Europe, the interests of literature and commerce both exert an increasing influence towards its acquisition as an accomplishment; and in this country, its indefinite power of increase will make it hereafter the most general language. The author who uses it, knows that those who can sympathize with him, or follow his views, are innumerable; the theatre on which he performs is the largest, and the audience the most numerous in the world.

The love of distinction, the ambition of fame, those natural and generous consequences of liberty, must have numerous votaries here. That love of future renown, which is surely not absurd unless the hope of immortality be groundless; that preference of posthumous fame to notoriety, which abstracts itself from the present, and is anxious to be enrolled in the temple of memory; "that last infirmity of noble minds," if it prove a disorder to the individual, is a benefit to the public.*

* What booteth it to have been rich alive?
What to be great? what to be gracious?

Now, as our families cannot be perpetuated ; as we have no entailed privileges, no hereditary rank ; as no one is born to titular distinctions ; as every man must achieve all that he possesses ; literary celebrity will become an object of pursuit with many, who cannot obtain it by any less arduous mode. The equality that subsists among us can only be surmounted by superior attainments ; and those who do not take the roads of wealth or politics in pursuit of these, will follow that of literature.

Perhaps it may be found, that literature will derive facilities from the unfettered state of opinion among us. In some countries education is in the hands of particular classes of men, who give it a bias subservient to the views of government, or their own order. They are too apt to have a morbid fear of novelty, and a tender toleration, of existing abuses. Their system is founded on prescription, with a strong reluctance to admit any change, even if that change be improvement. They themselves went through a certain routine, and they seem loath that others should escape from its irksomeness, lest their acquisitions should be undervalued. There is a strong disposition to subject every mind to one method ; their plan is the bed of Procrustes, and the mind must be stretched or contracted to fit it.

If after death no token doth survive
Of former being in this mortal house,
But sleeps in dust, dead and inglorious ?
Like beast whose breath but in his nostrils is,
And hath not hope of happiness or bliss.

Spencer's Ruins of Time.

In the freer countries, there are some exceptions, but they are all modern or all private institutions ; the public establishments still wear the livery of the 15th century. Many minds are thus exercised in trammels, until the natural freedom and spring are lost, and they ever after move in the required gait, that never oversteps the ancient paths. In this country, when we shall have a body of instructors with equal ability, and less subject to the influence of prejudice, less bigoted to antique forms, because they are antique, we may hope for greater facilities or fewer obstacles to the developement of talent. A boy's case will not be desperate, though he cannot make Latin verses ; if he can comprehend a problem of Euclid or a moral of history, it will be received in commutation for an exercise in prosody ; and if his mind can soar, the course will be left in some degree to his own choice, and not be dragged back to earth, to flutter in one, for which he may feel nothing except repugnance and inaptitude.

There is one circumstance which has, in some respects, a favourable, in others an unfavourable tendency for literature,—and which of these preponderates, is uncertain, though I am inclined to think the latter ;—this is the wide circulation of newspapers, and their extremely miscellaneous character, which furnish great variety of reading, and tend to encourage desultory habits of it ; they offer a receptacle for speedy publication, open to almost every one's communications. This gives an easy

opportunity to young writers to try their pens ; but it also wastes the energy of many minds in disconnected essays on subjects of temporary interest, the fleeting topics of the day. The facility of publication, in this ready mode of occupying public attention, is very attractive to those who want to express their thoughts without the labour of correction. Opinions made up under immediate excitement, commonly exhibit great rashness of judgment and a strong tincture of prejudice : a loose and careless style is adopted, in which violence and exaggeration supply the place of correctness and strength ; where the effect is from “ the venom of the shaft, not the vigour of the bow.” There are many persons who probably would not write at all, if they were obliged to write with more care and effort ; but there are some who have in this way got rid of their thoughts as they occurred, without the trouble of maturing them, and have frittered away powers of intellect, that might have produced works of permanent utility.

We derive great satisfaction for the present, and entertain strong hopes for the future, from the advances we have made within a few years ; while, from the steps that have been taken, we may presume upon a developement, a few years hence, that will exhibit a very high ratio of increase. The standard of education has been enlarging, instructors are more able, and students more accomplished. This is shown not only in the number and character of the books we have published, but is very obvious

and striking in most of our journals and periodical works. The transactions of our learned societies, exhibit very gratifying proofs of this progressive amelioration. The volumes of the Historical Society, though they might be supposed to have exhausted the most interesting papers, still continue to be annually published, affording a mass of documents, invaluable to the American historian. The Transactions of the American Academy, have been constantly improving, and will now compare with those of almost any learned Society in Europe. None of these labours are paid for;—every thing of this kind is gratuitous, and these productions are the voluntary efforts of individuals, in the moments of leisure from active business, either in public or private life. Indeed, it may be considered as one of the advantages of modern literature, that the race of mere authors is almost extinct. The character of literary men stands higher. It is not considered in Europe, as it formerly was, degrading to a man of noble rank or in high employ, to write a book;—it now adds to his consideration. Men of learning and science have been discovered to be capable of various kinds of public employment, and talents now are not thought incompatible with performing an active part, either in public or private concerns. There is less encouragement in ours than in any other country, for a man to confine himself to authorship. This I think a great advantage; it prevents genius from degrading itself by unworthy subserviency, and it gives servants to the public of

greater capacity. It brings men of learning and men of the world more into contact ; it blends the business of life and its instruction more intimately : it destroys pedantry, and enriches literature.

LETTER VI.

FINE ARTS.

MY DEAR SIR,

WE agreed so fully in the opinion, that our country was destined to acquire a glorious reputation from the successful cultivation of the fine arts, that I very cheerfully answer your inquiries, as to our prospects respecting them. On this subject there is much prejudice, and it is so often considered under very narrow and false views of its importance, that I shall, at the risk of repeating many ideas which may be already familiar to you, presume so far on your patience, as to give an outline of the reasons which should influence us, nationally and individually, to promote the growth of the fine arts in our country. I think my observations will be capable of general application, but I request you to bear in mind, that I am writing under the impulse of local impressions, and my allusions will be principally to facts existing in this vicinity.

It is impossible to avoid very confident expectations of future glory from the arts, when we consider the numerous indications that we have given of aptitude for their cultivation. Surely, the eminent artists produced in this country, during the last generation, did not spring from mere chance; but we shall continue to produce others in constant succession. If we claim as our countrymen those who pursued their profession under every disadvantage, from the strong instinct of talent alone; and who were obliged to expatriate themselves at periods when revolution and poverty prevented their employment at home; we may calculate on having an increased number, when we are beginning to get models that will serve to awaken and guide the efforts of genius; when wealth has given us the ample means of patronage,—when the circle of taste is widening every day, and when a sense of national policy, is beginning to call on the arts to promote national feeling.

In this, as in some other cases; in almost every thing but patriotism and virtue, we are obliged, after admitting present deficiencies, and pointing out the remedy, to console ourselves, by looking forward. The difference between this and some older countries, is the difference between anticipation and retrospect; ours are the pleasures of hope, theirs the pleasures of memory. We do not expect a harvest without having planted the seed, and proved the soil to be fruitful. Accidents may retard the growth, disastrous seasons may blight the

expected fruit; but these will be transient disappointments. A people enjoying the highest degree of liberty, and a power of expansion nearly unlimited; with facilities for all kinds of acquisition; possessing wealth, learning, skill, and security for these advantages, must advance. Sanguine as some of our calculations have been, they have more often fallen short of, than exceeded the reality. The power of production in our country has nothing to fetter it, and every thing to maintain its excitement.

As New-York and Philadelphia had already commenced institutions for the public patronage of the arts, a few gentlemen undertook to furnish a similar protection in Boston; in which design they made some progress, and obtained a subscription of four or five thousand dollars; but, I believe, suspended its execution, to combine it with a plan for erecting a building for the Atheneum, that is in contemplation. An exhibition room, where pictures, models in architecture and sculpture, engravings, &c. can be shown to advantage, is one of the most useful aids that can be given. If an artist paints a very large historical picture, that will excite general interest, it will often reward him to exhibit it by itself; but smaller pictures, and other performances, require a common exhibition room, which will draw the attention of the public, where taste may be formed by comparing various styles together, and where the artist himself receives the most useful hints, by observing different *manners*, and learning to correct his own defects, by examining both the beauties and defects of others.

When the subject was agitated of commencing an institution to promote the arts which should grow with their growth, and be extended hereafter, if found to be expedient ; the proposition elicited a good deal of obvious wisdom. Very sensible observations were made by that numerous class, whose remarks are equally valuable the last day of the week as the first, and who are always ready upon a new proposal, because they are always on one side. Others, in a spirit of true magnanimity, forbore to express any opinion against a design of such inherent absurdity, that it must inevitably sink with its own weight. Others were unwilling to consider a subject at all, on which they had never reflected, and which they looked upon with indifference. Even many of those who were favourably disposed towards it, gave their assent in that feeling of public spirit, which induces them to wish well to every thing proposed for the public advantage, rather than to any particular conviction of the utility of this undertaking. You will then allow me to discuss some of the points which the question of encouraging the arts presents, and take a cursory notice of some of the objections, that have been made to them.

To commence with objections ;—the most serious one was that made by the Abbe Gregoire to Mr. Barlow, in his letter on the subject of one of the plates in the Columbiad ; an objection which has been sometimes urged by others, and which, if it were just, ought to be fatal,—that the arts exercised

a corrupting influence on society. Now that society has sometimes exercised a corrupting influence on the arts, is unfortunately true ; but yet no one will probably contend that society ought to be destroyed. There have been very immoral books published, but no one would consent to renounce the use of printing. If too many artists of the Italian school delineated the voluptuous fables of antiquity, it was because the profligacy of their patrons left them no alternative. The tendency of all the higher branches of the art is unquestionably to elevate the mind ; and in this country, or in England, no artist of any note can be reproached with licentious works. The arts have, perhaps, no conservative quality that can preserve them pure in the midst of profligacy and debasement ; but they will certainly be found on the side of all that is grand and sublime in human character, so long as the disposition of their country and the spirit of the times, will uphold them in that cause.

It was said to be premature to make a foundation for the arts before they existed among us ;—we shall be very glad to have them hereafter, when people have acquired a taste for them ;—they will come in due season. It was not thought premature by our ancestors to found a college for teaching Latin and Greek, before they could raise Indian corn enough to feed themselves through the year ; and yet, to the barren rocks from whence they caused the living sources of learning to flow, hundreds have resorted, from distant and more fertile

regions, to drink of the stream, and pay homage to their foresight ; and from these very fountains the whole country has been refreshed and invigorated. Yet with what a smile of insolent pity, would modern sagacity have regarded a scheme for teaching Greek and Latin, when they were almost destitute of food and clothing ! It could not be premature, when our neighbours were commencing similar attempts, respecting which, we must choose between being the rivals or tributaries. Besides, it was not a Vatican or a Louvre that was proposed ;—it was not the intention to import delicate exotics to be nourished by artificial heat ; no,—it was only to shelter and protect what our own soil had produced, —what had grown up within our borders, from the native riches of the clime, and to prepare, in the most gradual manner, the means of future development.

It was said we had not wealth enough ; for this objection there are at least two answers. In the first place, we have more wealth than many countries possessed, when they carried the arts to the highest state of splendour ; and more money has been expended on foreign productions, altogether worthless—tawdry coloured prints from worn-out plates, for example, than would have furnished a sufficient, temporary support, to our own productions. We have a taste for splendid furniture in our houses, and certainly prove, by their appearance, that we have the means of gratifying it. No one will assert that we have so little taste or senti-

ment, as to be insensible to the pleasure of looking at some interesting native landscape, some delineation of a memorable event in our history, some likeness of a departed patriot, or a public benefactor. If these could be obtained, there are few even who would not, if it were necessary, forego the purchase of some gilded bauble to procure them; and if there are any doubts whether the influence of taste would go so far, there can be none about the power of fashion, or that it would be exerted in this direction.

It is not strange, perhaps, and ought not to excite vexation, that mistaken notions should prevail upon a question, which circumstances have not given occasion to most persons to reflect upon sufficiently. Yet nothing can be more absurd, than some of the observations that have been thrown out. When on a recent occasion, it was proposed to erect certain monuments, or procure the busts and portraits of some eminent patriots; it was declared that we did not want pictures or statues, that we had no taste for the fine arts, and were too poor to encourage them. Now, the only fine art that had much to do with this question, was gratitude. When it was proposed to commemorate some national triumph, or to perpetuate the likeness of some great patriot, it might have been inferred, from the objections, that it was intended to have a statue of an Apollo, or a painting of the siege of Troy; rather than the Death of Warren, and the Battle of Bunker's Hill.

If indeed the object was merely to found a school for the production of that ideal beauty, or those fine delineations of the allegorical and picturesque, which can afford such delight to the connoisseur, it might be left to him to provide for his own gratification. Ignorance only can deny, that there must be something of high value and attraction, in those fragile or diminutive specimens of the genius of Greece, which have survived the existence of the people that produced them, and outlived powerful empires. These productions, that have excited the envy and admiration of all cultivated nations, cannot be destitute of merit; yet if the subject were confined to them, however innocent or refined the pursuit of such studies and tastes might be, it should be considered a matter of individual luxury, not of public concern; a subject to be left to the management of the *dilettanti*, not demanding the interference of the state,—But is it so? Is this the only point of view in which it is to be regarded, and are policy and patriotism wholly uninterested in the event?

I would not have you think me insensible to the delight which exquisite performances in painting, sculpture, architecture, or music can afford,—far from it,—without any pretensions to connoisseurship in either of these branches, I would not willingly renounce the pure and elevated pleasure which they have inspired, even in one so ignorant of those arts as myself; but it is not for the sake of this pleasure, though its tendency is to raise the mind above gratifications of a coarser nature, that the encouragement of the arts should be promoted; nor

should this pleasure give the impulse for their establishment in this country. The grounds on which they should be protected and fostered, belong to the patriot and statesman, and not to the virtuoso.

If we had gone on, as we were proceeding, till within a recent period, we should have formed in the end a collection of very intelligent and skilful planters, farmers, mechanics, and traders; but we should have gradually lost what we possessed of national character and patriotic feeling; we should have had no rallying points for public sentiments, no topics for general enthusiasm, no sanctuary where patriotism could have taken refuge from the violence of party; we should have been degraded into tributaries to foreign nations, in every thing that regarded sentiment, and been destitute of all the associations that ennoble the love of country. Even our parties formerly, seemed to renounce every thing indigenous in their contests; and arrayed themselves in foreign liveries, echoing the vaunting of other nations, until they had well nigh forgotten they had one of their own. If a mob contended at a theatre for some popular air, it was, *God save the King*, or *Ca Ira*; if a festival was held, the songs commemorated the triumphs of foreigners over each other, and sometimes, by implication, over ourselves. Our houses were decorated with French victories by land, and English ones by sea. The print shops of Europe supplied us with representations of their warlike triumphs, their beneficent actions, their illustrious men. All that excited admiration, all the sympa-

thies of a public nature, that blend themselves with the holiday emotions of the human heart, were engaged in the service of strangers. Such a state of things could not last, and if it had endured much longer, our national existence would have lingered on, without glory and without security. Events gradually weakened this humiliating state of things, and the late war consummated its ruin. We have now popular ballads, and festal songs of our own; we too can show our battles by land and by sea, and our triumphs on both; we too have begun to recollect, that we had national events to commemorate, and great men to honour. A reviving animating impulse has been given to public sentiment; the glory of our Revolution, and the services of its illustrious men, have begun to occupy the attention of the public. The national and state governments are awakening to a sense of their true interests in this respect; the actions and the portraits of our own citizens will become the ornaments of our cities and dwellings; and national gratitude is at length heartily engaged in securing our national fame. To further perpetuate these purposes, constitutes the invaluable utility of the arts, and furnishes their noblest vocation.

If all history be not false, all knowledge of the human heart vain; the erection of public monuments, the keeping alive the remembrance of great services, by the aid of the arts, is the reward most ardently desired by genius and heroic virtue. The common and instant favours of society, are the pre-

vailing motives for a great number of the most useful and indispensable services, and sufficiently gratify many honourable and meritorious men ; but such are not minds of the first order. The *famæ sacra fames* is the instinct of elevated souls, and the prompter of the noblest class of actions. Nor is it enough that such actions should only be recorded in history ; they must be represented in visible memorials in our temples and public edifices ; there they are recognized by every citizen, and not reserved for the observation of the student ; there they are brought often and palpably to view, and not kept out of sight in neglected annals. If the arts were to have been finally proscribed in this country, the deleterious effects would have gone deeper than would be at first imagined. We should have depreciated our own character, by neglecting all posthumous reputation. All mankind would have been admitted to our Temple of Fame, except an American : it would have been a misfortune for a great man to have been born here ; he could have obtained no entrance through its gates ; he would have been like the people of France on the week days, excluded from their museums, which, with great courtesy, are shown to strangers ; he would have felt like a Frenchman, whom I once heard exclaim with vexation, on observing a small party entering a reserved part of the garden of plants at Paris, to which he was refused admittance, when he was told it was because we were foreigners, and he was a Frenchman,—“ *Ah ! comme on est malheureux d’être Français.*”

'To these high purposes the arts have been gradually directed, by that progress of improvement, which has operated such great ameliorations of the state of society, within the last fifty years. They have been withdrawn from frivolous employments, to the most useful purposes. The ancients engaged the arts in the service of religion and patriotism. In their state of ignorance, with respect to the former, the arts were a powerful ally; and the gods they produced for the adoration of Pagans, still excite the admiration of more enlightened worshippers. Their patriotism was also nourished by them, and statues were erected to all those who had served the state. When the arts revived in modern times, they were enlisted, particularly painting and architecture, in the service of religion. They afterwards fell off from this direction, and became subservient, in a great degree, to mere fancy and luxury. They have experienced another revolution, and are now returning to their legitimate uses. In France, the government has employed painters and sculptors in representing the actions and the individuals, that will live in history. In England, the same course has been followed, and perhaps to greater extent. Mr. West has been a great leader in this course;—his *Death of Wolfe*, *Battle of La Hogue*, *Death of Nelson*, and many other historical events, are well known. Mr. Copley's *Death of Lord Chatham*, *Victory of Admiral Duncan*, *Death of Major Pierson*, &c. &c.; Mr. Trumbull's *Sortie of Gibraltar*, &c. are instances, among many others;

and I have named these, because here were three of our countrymen engaged at one time, in the service of a foreign state. Sculpture, in England, has been almost exclusively employed in the service of the nation. The numerous monuments ordered by Parliament in Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's, have employed all their eminent artists; and the busts of distinguished individuals, in addition, are nearly all the works they have produced. How much more rational and honourable is such occupation, both for the artist and the public, than the production of ideal figures, only to exemplify skill in the conception of imaginary beauty. Figures of this description, gods and goddesses, in modern times, border upon affectation and ridicule, since they create few of the associations that made them interesting to the ancients; and as there are some half dozen statues among those which they have left, that are models of the various kinds of ideal beauty not to be surpassed, it would seem better to have copies made of these, and let our artists devote themselves to monuments, which will connect their names with the history of their own times and country.

There is one of the arts that is so indispensable in almost all climates of the world, that every people, above the condition of troglodytes, are obliged to recur to it. Shelter, in many countries, is as necessary as food, yet how imperfect with us is the art that prepares it. How few buildings in this country, either public or private, are constructed with a due

regard to the principles of beauty, or a wise distribution as to convenience for the occupants. How often are they left to mere mechanics, who erect them with the aid of the "builder's assistant," with about the same degree of success, that would be obtained in a correspondence, guided by the "Complete Letter Writer." Surely, next to agriculture, architecture should receive the fostering care of the state, when so much of the economy, the appearance, and the comfort of a country, depend on its being well understood, and thoroughly adapted to all the wide variety of purposes, to which it is subservient.

A foundation for a school of architecture is now peculiarly necessary. Our buildings, public and private, are every year becoming more important and expensive. Our race of wooden buildings is annually decaying, and more permanent ones erecting in their stead. Bad, inconvenient plans and designs, violating the principles of the art, are now more than ever to be deplored; because, when of wood, they might have decayed, or been burnt up; but now, all blunders will last for centuries. Almost every year some churches are erected;—what a pity that we could not get a style of building better suited to the purpose of religious worship, than those awkward wooden lanterns, that are almost every where exhibited. The period has now gone by, when the spirit of religious dissent, which proscribed the Lord's Prayer, and the reading of the Bible, determined also to dispense with every thing like

dignity and solemnity in churches, as abominations, that would lead to dangerous errors. Probably, many parishes might now be brought to give up having a window to each pew, out of which they could all stare at any passing object, whilst the minister was performing their duty of devotion; and they might be induced to have their meeting-house so constructed, that the congregation should be separated from all exterior objects; and being freed from the glare of sunshine and numerous lights, find, in the solemnity of more sober tones and perfect seclusion, an appropriate situation for the exercises of devotion.

It was remarked by a distinguished individual, many years since, "that the genius of architecture seemed to have shed his malediction over our country." Some buildings have been erected within a later period, which prove that the spell may be broken. Our progress has been from wood to brick, from brick to marble and granite. In Baltimore and New-York, the churches are the handsomest buildings; in Philadelphia, the banks. There is one building for this purpose in the latter city, which you well know is admitted to be the most beautiful edifice in this country, and there are two or three others that are worthy of observation; but the churches are remarkably plain and mean. This led to the remark of a lady: "that it was easy to perceive "what deity the Philadelphians worshipped, by the "temples they erected to him; their temples of "mámmon were the most splendid in the United

“States, their churches the meanest.” It may weaken the pungency of this sarcasm to observe, that this state of their churches was owing to the strong predominance of Quakerism ; one of whose whims it is, to proscribe every thing elegant, variegated, or majestic ; this principle, which is carried to a singular degree of perfection in their meeting-houses, had its influence over other sects, especially when their relative numbers were very different from what they are at present. We can boast of nothing equal to the buildings alluded to, but we have made one step in the progress of improvement ;—we are getting rid of our wooden edition of edifices, and constructing them of brick or stone. The latter, particularly, is getting more and more into use, and our future buildings will present at least one requisite, the appearance of solidity, in which they have hitherto been lamentably deficient.

It is not only very desirable that we should introduce a correct style of architecture, since we have begun to make use of more durable materials, but it is absolutely necessary, because the more refractory character of our materials will drive us into more simplicity. When soft pine wood was the only article used in the construction of a house, except the rough stones for the cellar walls, and the bricks in the chimney, it was easy to mould it into any form ; and this has often led to a very preposterous and fantastic use of ornament. Columns, pilasters, balustrades, porticos, turrets, and all the minor kinds of architectural ornaments, have been some-

times most absurdly lavished ;—a false taste has been formed in consequence. We tried our hand at the most complicated variations, before we were able to judge of the simplest accords. But it is harmony and simplicity, in architecture, as in music, that give pleasure, not the combination of difficulties and exuberance of ornaments. The two styles which are best suited to our circumstances, are the Gothic for churches, and the Doric for other buildings. The first is susceptible of any degree of ornament, or will admit of the greatest plainness ; the other, in its majestic simple harmony, has produced the most striking, and the most durable edifices in the world.

Trinity church, in the Gothic style, at New Haven, is the handsomest church in this part of the Union ;* there are in Boston, Providence, and in some other towns, places of public worship that are not destitute of merit, but it is united with great defects. It would be an invidious task to point out all these, but there are two cases in which bad taste has operated to destroy a good effect, where it might have been produced, that may be mentioned as examples. A church was built a few years since in Boston, for which the original design was very handsome. It was intended to be a parallelogram, with a Doric portico ; the walls were plain, with large windows, making only one story, and built of a beautiful white granite. Thus far the original design ;

* Since this was written, two churches have been erected, that in purity of design surpass all others in the Union. Christ Church in Gardiner, Maine, and St. Paul's Church in Boston, both of stone ; the former Gothic, the latter Grecian, are the finest specimens of these styles, existing in this country.

but the plans of an architect have to pass through the hands of a committee. The first thing that was done, was to add a steeple ; a very pretty one ; and this though a sort of monster in the architecture, is justifiable, from the agreeable effect it produces at a distance : no church indeed ought to be built without one ; a village spire is always picturesque, and awakens pleasing emotions, and the effect of steeples and domes, in giving an air of animation and grandeur to a town, may be judged of negatively, by seeing what a dull, lifeless, unmeaning aspect Philadelphia presents to the observer without, though it is such a handsome city within. The next alteration was to change the form to an octagon, a figure which is appropriate enough for a crystal, but is an absurdity in architecture. The portico was Doric, but these columns, though made of wood, were with an Ionic proportion ! thus mutilating and destroying its whole beauty. To remedy this glaring fault, an addition, which does not belong to the order, was put on at the bottom, to diminish their dyspeptic appearance, that only increased the disorder. If it had been proposed to paint one red, one green, one blue, one yellow, it would have been scoffed at as absurd ; and yet it would have been a less grievous blunder than has been committed now ; for it is not uncommon in Italy, to see columns of different coloured marbles in the same edifice, where the proportions are all alike. Fortunately these deformed columns are of wood, and must soon grow shabby. They will then perhaps be replaced by col-

umns of the Nova Scotia freestone, which is easily worked, and is now getting into use here, for every thing where the chisel is required.

Circumstances like these ought to be made known, to save the honour of the architect. A similar instance may be mentioned in the State House in Boston. The committee were alarmed at the idea of expense, and therefore ordered ten feet of solid wall to be left out of each wing in the length, and a proportionate quantity in the width: this of course gave it a lantern-like appearance, and made the dome so out of proportion, as to crush the edifice. It is hardly worth while to criticise a building of brick, with wooden ornaments; but from its commanding situation, and general outline, this produces at a distance a much better effect, than many more costly and handsome buildings. One other instance may be mentioned, where a fine effect is destroyed still more perversely, because the pretence of saving is extremely trifling. A very excellent and capacious establishment for an insane hospital, has been recently made in the vicinity of Boston. The centre of this hospital was formerly a large country house, standing in a very conspicuous position; the estate was purchased, and two additional buildings, as wings, advancing in front, on diverging lines, are connected by galleries with the centre building, and might have been made to form a noble and imposing whole. But this has been marred. The centre, which is of brick and stone, and the connecting corridors, are painted a light yellow; the

wings are left with their original colour of the red brick : there is something so delicious in the colour of dingy red bricks, especially in the country, that no one could have the heart to paint them over. The consequence is, that the whole is disjointed, and from the points where they would be seen to the greatest advantage, may be taken for great warehouses or manufactories, and seem to have no connexion with the centre building. Now, if this arrangement had been made by any of the unfortunate tenants, it would have been put down to a broken disordered intellect, but it being by those who have the direction of them, nothing is said.— There is a great deal of injustice in this world.

It is a cruel thing to architects to have their plans mutilated without remorse, or consideration of them, in a scientific point of view. In a free country every thing of this kind is done by committees, composed commonly of men who may be invaluable from their active habits of business or benevolence, but who are too apt to consider the plan and appearance in a subordinate point of view, from a misapprehension of their real importance. These mistakes are not confined to our country ; England has many awkward edifices to show. There is one very remarkable one, of which you may have heard the history. I allude to the Mansion House of the city of London : when this was about to be built, the Earl of Burlington, who had great taste in architecture, sent a very classic design for the edifice ; but it was from Palladio. The worthy Com-

mon Council knew nothing and cared nothing about Palladio ; they adopted a plan of one of their own citizens, "a man whom they knew," a ship-carpenter ; and the building he produced for them, has much more nearly the appearance of the stern of a three decker, than any other edifice on the surface of the land. I would not have architects trusted implicitly ; they are often led into plans of useless and dangerous extent ; but the harmony of a design ought not to be lightly destroyed. Very glaring defects in public buildings are a standing reproach to a community, and they are mischievous in accustoming the eye to deformity. Taste ought not to be too much disregarded ; it is often the synonyme of judgment, and if consulted in the external appearance, it will, on the mere principle of congruity, regulate what is within ; and the improvements resulting will not be superficial, but go to the right distribution of every thing that is solid and essential in the art.

There is another art which is the handmaid of all the others, whose productions are more easily understood than either of the rest ; an art which is daily increasing both for use and ornament, enabling us to participate in some degree in the pleasure of beholding numerous objects of sculpture and architecture, as well as painting, which else would be beyond our reach ; you know, without my naming it, that I mean the art of engraving. By the aid of this, we obtain a correct idea of all the noblest efforts of sculpture and architecture, and a still more

complete representation of all celebrated paintings. Engraving is, to all the other arts, what printing is to literature. It multiplies the copies of what is deserving of admiration, and brings them within the walls of every house. The patriot and the philanthropist is thus every where known; this art puts it in our power, when paintings are beyond our means, to decorate our rooms with the portraits of those we love and honour, though they may have lived in other times or in other regions.

There is another department in which this art is of great importance, and where the use of it is constantly increasing; this is in education, and almost all kinds of instruction. A representation of objects, instead of a description, is a prodigious facility to children in acquiring knowledge. This method has been much extended of late years, and capable of yet wider application; it would be difficult to estimate all the advantages that have resulted from it in the early stages of education. The extension of the science, and the multiplication of machinery, make its aid of some consequence to almost every individual; there is no man who has not experienced the difficulty of comprehending the appearance of any object of natural history, or any machine for the purpose of agriculture or manufactures, from mere description, but who obtains a perfect idea of it at once from an engraving. There are few books to which this art cannot add, either a most agreeable embellishment, or indispensable explanation.

It would be too tedious to go into further exemplifications of the positive utility of the Fine Arts ; but it is in this point of view chiefly that I should regard the question of introducing and fostering them. From their most elevated purposes, their influence descends, by nice gradations, to almost every branch of human industry ; it is felt in many kinds of manufactures, and materially promotes the beauty and excellence of most productions of the mechanic arts. Every country must possess them, or become tributary for their results to others. The sections of the United States that take the lead in their encouragement, will have very great advantages over their neighbours, not only in intellectual refinement, but in the products of their industry.

LETTER VII.

ON THE RELATIVE RANK OF AMERICANS.

MY DEAR SIR,

FROM some expressions in your last letter, I infer that your friend the Baronet has made something like a complaint against me, on which I wish to offer you some explanation. I showed him very

cheerfully all the civilities that were in my power, on your introduction, and because he was a stranger : he could not help being a dull man, and I was willing to overlook it. On one or two occasions, however, he assumed certain airs in society, which induced me to treat him a little cavalierly. You will believe, that I am incapable of intentionally hurting the feelings of any man, without provocation, of whatever condition he may be. On this occasion it was too trifling to cause much sensation ; and I thought his perceptions rather too obtuse, to have felt the slight shade of difference in my conduct. The circumstance gives me a good theme for some remarks on relative rank, which I have long intended to offer you.

The comparative rank between Americans and the subjects of European monarchies, has never been settled ; there is no common umpire whom both will acknowledge. The legends of heraldry are not accredited by us ; we cannot be marshalled by the Garter King at Arms, or the *Grande Maitre des Ceremonies* ; there is no international code that can adjust the respective pretensions. We must maintain ours, by preserving with vigilance the freedom, civil, political, and religious, which we enjoy at home ; and by securing exterior consideration, from a course of integrity, firmness and independence towards foreign nations. In the mean time they are apt to fall into the mistake, of levelling us down to similar denominations among themselves. They see no titular rank among us ;

they see nothing but planters, merchants, and professional men ; no noble idlers ; and they place us in the condition of such characters in their society, to whom they assign a subordinate rank. But this will not do ; men who have higher privileges in one country, cannot be classed with those who hold lower ones in another.

Our situation and that of England approach the nearest ; the identity of language, the similarity of laws and habits, make the examination of our relative circumstances more easy, and I shall therefore have a more particular reference to them than to other nations. The English nation has long been the envy of its neighbours, for its free institutions ; and the more enlightened and generous minds on the continent, have made, and are still making, great efforts to obtain the same advantages. The English were not insensible to their good fortune ; it has always furnished a theme of exultation. The perfect security of civil rights, and high degree of political liberty they enjoyed, were apt to make them arrogant, presuming, and contemptuous towards their neighbours, who were subjected to gross inequality of personal rights and a state of servitude ; mitigated only by the spirit and intelligence of the nation. English insolence became proverbial with those, who were often exposed to its observation. This is not a very amiable feature, but it is a natural one ; the feeling of freedom elevates those who possess it, and they will be prone to treat with contempt

those who are without it. The freest nation must be the proudest, and they will often irritate, by an exhibition of this pride, those who are their inferiors in this respect. The English are the freest people in Europe ; but their government is a monarchy founded on a gradation of rights and privileges ; the body of the nation is on a near equality of condition, but there are a few with hereditary advantages, which place them infinitely above their fellow subjects. In this country no class is proscribed for the sake of the rest ; every man is born with the same inalienable rights ; no one can claim precedence of another from birth, and no man can be raised except by his merits, talents, or services, above his fellow citizens, and by their consent and during their pleasure. We in fact live in the highest and most perfectly organized state of freedom that ever was known ; the condition of man is higher than has ever been assumed by any nation, ancient or modern, and the consequences are inevitable.

We are born under a perfect equality, so far as human enactments can produce it, and every man has a chance of elevating himself, if he has the capacity and inclination to do so. It results, that there is a freer bearing, a more unshackled gait in people of all classes, than is seen in other countries. A merchant, a farmer, a professional man, feels no inferiority of rank, and his personal position is therefore higher. In England, where the security of civil rights maintains great independence of

character in the people,—a sort of defiance, even, growing out of this conviction of personal security, and a sullen consciousness of political inferiority, may be more often witnessed than in this country ; where the perfect conviction of political equality, and the absence of all titular pre-eminence, give a cast of independence to the manners, the more careless and good-natured, as it never thinks of subserviency. You will understand me to be speaking generally ; I know that we have narrow-minded farmers and planters, paltry attorneys, and sordid traders ;—but, take the same classes of men in the same circumstances,—suppose them to possess the same degree of good sense, education and liberality,—the consciousness of equality will make the American superior, or prouder in his feelings, than the Englishman, who acknowledges, and if he attempts to shake it off, is made to feel, that he holds a subordinate station in society.

An Englishman might say—you seem to hold very extravagant pretensions ; you acknowledge no gradations. How far do you carry them ? I give you up our city knights, but surely, you, a plain citizen of a republic, will give precedence to our baronets ? Certainly not ; they are the lowest order of your nobility.—You would, then, place yourself on a footing with a baron, or a viscount ?—Those are only gradations in your privileged orders ; I acknowledge none.—Well, then, you rank yourself with the premier peer of England ? You wonder,—but this comes nearer to the case ; I assent to no

inherent, abstract inferiority ; I am equal to any man in my own country ; I must, therefore, degrade and forswear that country, or feel myself equal, in natural rank, to any man in your's ; and if you have established a scale of privileges, to which, from policy, or necessity, you are willing to submit, it is not binding on me ;—I place myself at the top of the scale, and not at the bottom. The shape of the button of your mandarins, or the colour of his dress, is a matter of indifference ;—no man possesses higher privileges than myself, in my own country. I therefore place myself with those, who have the highest in your's. This must be the feeling of every high-spirited, well educated American. Coarse minds will be apt to show it offensively ; well-bred men will be content with feeling it. They will not go abroad to be either missionaries or bullies ; nor will they dispute with the customs or feelings of other nations. Others may rank them as they see fit, but the reservation in their own breasts will preserve their just situation. There is such a strong infusion of republicanism in the English laws and manners, that their difference of privileges is less obnoxious to the feelings than in most other countries. A private gentleman there may preserve his independence in retirement, and rarely come in collision with any galling claims of precedence. But, if he goes to court, or into public life, he must submit to the pretensions of others, and take rank beneath them.

The English nobility was formerly so restricted, that the privileges of hereditary rank were seldom encountered. During the present reign, the titled class has been prodigiously increased, so that what Madame de Stael calls *les noms historiques*, are now swallowed up in the crowd. There were formerly just nobles enough to form a suitable show at court, and serve as a necessary pageant to the crown. Various motives of policy have enlarged their number, and lessened the relative importance of the old noblesse. A recent innovation has excessively multiplied the number of titled persons. Formerly there were two or three orders of knighthood, very limited in extent, which served, sometimes, a useful purpose to the court or the ministry, in securing the support of some powerful peer, whose vanity was sighing for a yard of blue riband. The republican principle of public applause and esteem, was generally sufficient for those, who distinguished themselves in the public service. The practice of the Continent, which made all such individuals courtiers, by giving them stars and ribands, has lately been adopted in England. One of the orders, particularly, has been greatly enlarged, and the continental forms adopted; —knights' grand crosses, and commanders, and knights' simple, multiplied; and the little, vain display of a piece of red riband, has converted all these into courtiers, and multiplied the class of expectants for similar favours. Whether this change, which is a more considerable one than it appears,

be useful or not, does not concern us, and I express no opinion about it; but you will perceive that it multiplies greatly the number of privileged persons of a subaltern class, who take rank of those who are not thus decorated, and would add to the number of persons, to whose pretensions we should not accede.

It is, perhaps, on the whole, a disadvantage to an Englishman to come to this country with a title. It makes him conspicuous, and excites a kind of gaping curiosity among the frivolous, who know nothing of lords and knights, but from plays and novels. They are apt to associate an idea of superior polish and refinement with a title, and when they are disappointed, in meeting this, the individual sinks as much too low in their appreciation, as he was before too high. With graver persons there is an association, from reading history, with great names, that is woefully disappointed when they see the modern representative; condemned, with feeble faculties, to totter under the burden of an illustrious appellation. The illusion is dissipated, and there is none of the habitual deference to mere rank, to keep up consideration. A man of genius, however, would, in this country, find it no disservice, unless he disliked notoriety. To such a man as Lord Byron, for instance,—his title would be no incumbrance, but the homage would be paid to the poet,* not to the lord.

* This was written before *Don Juan* was published.—Alas!

Such principles, it may be said, will have a tendency to keep up a proud, turbulent, ferocious spirit. . It might be so, if they were confined to a few individuals. But their universality forms the corrective. Where they are generally felt, every man must acknowledge the same rights in others, which he claims for himself—and if he forgets to do this, he is immediately put in mind of it. On the contrary, the tendency may be rather towards an insincere deference and civility, than to an arrogant, supercilious demeanour ;—since, as no public employment can be obtained but from the suffrages of others, the desire of popularity will generate habits of courtesy, where there is no real feeling of good-will.

There can be no fear, that this high feeling of equality will induce too much presumption, or make those who entertain it ridiculous and absurd ; yet cases of this kind will, without doubt, sometimes occur. Though we are born with the same natural rights, a thousand circumstances vary our condition ; —genius, education, and the numerous gradations of good and evil fortune, chequer and direct our course. None but a fool will deny that one man possesses greater talents, another greater wealth, or greater strength, than himself, and every one will be ready to give precedence where it is due, that he may be in turn enforce his own claims. It is the idea of abstract inferiority, that we renounce and deny. We do not allow that any man comes into the world our superior,—that he is born with here-

ditary privileges, which give him advantages over us, while in every other respect he may be decidedly our inferior. The divine right of kings, the infallibility of popes, the hereditary wisdom of senators, we laugh at, and consider quite as illegitimate, as the pretension of certain Asiatic barbarians, to a relationship with the sun and moon.

These principles in substance, not in form, are gaining ground in the world. That true appreciation, which, founded on the generous maxim of original equality, disregards artificial, barbarous distinctions, and ranks men, not according to their birth, but their merit, is daily becoming more prevalent ; the last thirty years has done much towards it ; the next will make a further addition. The amelioration is progressive, and unless the diffusion of intelligence is interrupted, must continue, in spite of all the efforts of abuse, bigotry, and partial interests, to prevent it. Talents and services are constantly diminishing and eclipsing the prerogatives of birth, and all those false distinctions which arose in a barbarous period. Consider the difference between a man of science in France, now, and in the days of Louis XIV. ; observe the different relations in which titled rank and untitled merit stand toward each other. Later policy has attempted to counteract the consequences, by enrolling the latter in the ranks of the former ; but this is only a temporary expedient, which cannot turn the course of public sentiment. In England, where the disparity was less shocking than in France, it is easy to remark the change that

has taken place ; it may be discovered in all their works that treat of manners ; plays, novels, and poetry. The different style of considering himself and of treating others, between a courtier, a century since, and now, is almost as great as it was in France. The man of rank does not value himself upon that, if he has any thing else to produce, and if he has not, he treats those more like his equals, who are in fact his superiors. The fellowship of mankind has become much more equal, much more intimate. The tone of arrogance and insolent condescension, which we read of in the manners of former times, would no longer be endured.

Let us, my dear friend, glory in our country and its institutions : our ancestors laid the foundations for a noble empire ; they came here with high ideas of freedom, and their descendants have improved on the principles they left them. The eyes of the world are turned towards us with anxiety and hope ; we have made the boldest experiments in the science of government, hitherto with the most complete success, and unless our posterity prove recreant to example, to their own interests and honour, our experience will hereafter be claimed in favour of mankind. What immeasurable good will result, if it can be shown to the world that a nation can dispense with the ruinous burdens of a hierarchy connected with the state, and an hereditary nobility ;—and who in this country can doubt it ? Every day shows our constitution to be stronger, from being founded on the broad principles of natural justice ;

on the equal interests and affections of a whole people, than if it derived a precarious existence, by securing the interested support of a part, at the expense of the rest of the community.—*Esto perpetua.*

CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF WOMEN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You smile at the pretty compliment I paid you when we last met, in having attributed the disagreeable weather we then felt to your agency ; and accuse me of want of gallantry. I acknowledge it was a piece of awkwardness, but you well understand that you must have the magnanimity to overlook occasional instances of it. I know not how such a speech should have occurred to me, for I always feel as if in sunshine when in your presence : the truth, however, is, that it was owing to a certain confusion of ideas. When you leave ——, it seems to me as if there was nothing left there ; that you bring every thing with you, and therefore that even the weather came too. A little reflection indeed would have convinced me of the absurdity of this : but it is impulse, not reflection, that governs your friends when they first meet you.

What a task have you imposed upon me ; it was done so lightly and so gracefully, that I thought it

was easy at the moment, and yet when I come to consider the undertaking seriously, I falter with the burthen. An account of the condition, character, and manners of your sex here; and a comparison between these, and the state of female society in other parts of the United States, and other countries, would be a performance of no less difficulty than interest. Still, to show my readiness to perform whatever you enjoin, I will offer you a few remarks on my countrywomen; claiming in advance your indulgence for any mistakes I may fall into, and that you will not attribute my deficiencies to any hesitation at receiving your injunctions as a law.

My observations may perhaps prove too general and vague, as I should be afraid of exposing myself to great mistakes in going much into detail. Many things appear strange, which, if we were acquainted with the motives of them, would be perfectly reasonable.—You may recollect, that when our friend —, resolved to have his own furnished apartments, after having every thing in readiness to take possession, he bought a bushel of ashes! Most people thought this one of the unaccountable whims of a *ce-libataire*; but every person who had been in Paris, where he had formed so many of his habits, and seen the admirable economy of a French fire-place, would have been satisfied with the foresight and convenience of this preparation.

From an accurate account of the condition of women in any country, it would not be difficult to

infer the whole state of society. So great is the influence they exercise on the character of men, that the latter will be elevated or degraded, according to the situation of the weaker sex. Where women are slaves, as in Turkey, the men will be the same: where they are treated as moral beings, where their minds are cultivated, and they are considered equals, the state of society must be high, and the character of men energetic and noble. There is so much quickness of comprehension, so much susceptibility of pure and generous emotion, so much ardour of affection in women, that they constantly stimulate men to exertion; and have at the same time a most powerful agency in soothing the angry feelings, and in mitigating the harsh and narrow propensities, which are generated in the strife of the passions.

How much of the decrepitude of Italy, of that fine country, where the people, as a whole, are so nerveless and submissive, while the individuals that compose it are gifted with the highest capacities and susceptibility; how much of this national imbecility might be traced, to the monstrous and perverted condition of their women! They are kept out of sight, in strict subservience, till they are married: they receive the husband that is given them without objection, as the means of emancipation, and make a choice as soon as the nuptials are over. The object of this choice, the *cavalier servente*, becomes at once the most insignificant of slaves; and all this takes place with the consent and approba-

tion of society. How many of the misfortunes of France may be traced to the less vicious, indeed, but false position of their females ; where women are taught to be adroit, graceful, glittering, smart, intriguing ; treated with unbounded deference, as objects of amusement, without one particle of real respect as women ; easily reconciled to the faithlessness of a husband, and satisfying his honour, if they do not betray his interests. When the unity of domestic life is thus broken, the charm is gone ; when home is cheerless, those who abandon it become profligate and reckless, and substitute noxious pleasures for its calm and genial delights. From a component part we may judge of the whole ; a nation is an accumulation of families : where the happiness of the latter is sapped, the disorder will pervade the system : if there is no private happiness, there can be no public spirit, no solid patriotism. Other motives must be substituted, which increase the corruption ; skill and energy may still govern such a nation, and make it powerful for a time, and for a long time ; but the progress of decay is still going on, and destruction cannot be averted.

Even in England, where a superior state of society is found, the situation of women is partially attainted with evil ; but it may be hoped that this evil is not encroaching. In the middling classes, domestic life is well regulated and harmonious : all the influence of the female character is exerted in the most desirable manner, and the virtues and energy of the nation are principally to be found with-

in these limits. The two extremes of society have each their peculiar vices, which impair the respectability and mar the happiness of the females who belong to them. In the lowest ranks, particularly in the large towns, the men are addicted to drunkenness, and spending a large portion of their earnings, in a stupifying habit of passing hours or even days together in their alehouses, smoking, and drinking strong beer. The wife is in the mean time struggling hard to support herself and children, with the simplest necessities of life, while her husband thus wastes all his surplus earnings; and when he comes home, in an intoxicated state, she is exposed to his brutality and cruelty. At the other extreme of society, the evil arises from more complicated causes; and though confined to a few, the mischief is great, because the examples are prominent and commanding. The people of the highest condition are not in reality the most pure and refined in their sentiments. Born to the certainty of high rank and great wealth, an early consciousness of their importance is developed; the forward, insolent child becomes, too often, the headstrong arrogant man. The advantages of superior education are sometimes neglected; and the individual overwhelmed with temptations, seldom makes those acquirements which would prevent his resorting to coarser gratifications. Too many motives of pride and ambition always interfere, to allow of marriages founded on mutual affection. Haughtiness, egotism, the impatience of restraint, and the habit

of profligate indulgences, soon interrupt the simplicity of domestic life, and the female is exposed either to the dreary blank of slighted affection, or to the sad alternative of bestowing it criminally.

Take the condition of women among us, comprehending all classes; and through their whole career, from infancy to age, I need not fear contradiction in saying, that it is the most fortunate in the world. There are in other countries a few who are artificially elevated; who have more power;—and if power forms happiness, why then more happiness, than any females in our country. In some nations, women who possess great attractions and accomplishments, are vastly more caressed and flattered for a period of their lives, than any of their sex are here; but they are afterwards often treated with the most mortifying neglect, which is embittered by the recollection of former attentions. But if there are none so high, there are none so low, as the thousands who are found on the other side of the Atlantic. No such figures as the streets, the markets, and the fields present in Europe, are to be seen here. The market-women of all descriptions have a coarseness and hardihood, a masculine ugliness that we never witness. Nor is this confined to the towns; but in the country, as they are habitually occupied in the labours of agriculture, tanned by the sun and hardened by exposure to the weather, and severe labour, the female peasantry present an appearance wholly unlike any class of women among us.

To begin with the most numerous order,—with those who commence life with nothing but strength to labour for subsistence, and the hope of future competence:—In the country, or the towns, the females in this class are never exposed to work in the open air. All that is required out of doors is performed by the men. That the women are very assiduously, and even laboriously employed, every one may witness,—but their labours are almost wholly domestic, and performed under shelter. They are not seen driving market carts, standing in the streets, carrying heavy burdens, or engaged from morning to night in the open fields. They are not exposed to the inclemency of the weather, to the promiscuous mingling with the crowds of a city, or in large groupes in the toils of the field. They live secluded in the performance of their household labours, and rarely meet in any assemblage, except when they go in their best attire, with decency and solemnity, to public worship.

Besides, they have higher hopes than the labouring classes in Europe. The journeyman may look forward with certainty, to become, in a few years, if he has common skill and industry, a master workman in his turn. The farmer is not, as in Europe, a mere peasant, labouring on land which he never dreams of owning; but he is here a proprietor, though he begins at first with only a log-house, and a piece of forest to be cleared, he is sure that, in the end, he shall possess a productive farm, and the means of comfortable subsistence.

The women in these classes, who are often more refined and ambitious than the men, conduct themselves with a view to their future situations; and often stimulate their husbands to those exertions for acquiring property and improving their children, in which they are willing to participate. This prospect of bettering their condition, operates very favourably upon them, since it encourages the men to domestic habits and economy; who know their savings will all be productive of very compound advantage, and that, as they advance in life, they may look forward to a comfortable support from the results of former labour.

The excitement produced by this well-founded expectation of rising in the world, has had many beneficial consequences. A degree of pride, and greater self-respect, have brought their aid to the assistance of some of the moral duties. If we may believe some traditions of former manners, there is a great improvement in them. The rapidity of intercourse, the increase of reading, and the activity of trade, have carried light into every district. The fashions and opinions of the day make their way into the meanest village;—the conduct of all is open to observation, and the tendency to assimilate is therefore universal. There are, no doubt, some inconveniences arising from this same source, but these are only inconveniences,—while the advantages are substantial and progressive. This sentiment produces an evident reluctance in all services that are not gratuitous; and that awkward, vulgar

pride, which is abashed by the superiority it is afraid to acknowledge, though it seldom acts offensively, by insult, yet shows itself too often in the defensive, by a cold and churlish demeanour.

The pervading influence of fashion, to which I have alluded, in doing away all peculiarities, may be advantageous in some respects; but it makes a sad diminution of the pleasure of the artist and the traveller, in destroying all variety, and much that is picturesque. A general fusion and blending of dress and manners, is the characteristic of the age. There will be, hereafter, no distinctions of costume to be met with. In Europe and in America the same fashions now make their way from Paris and London, to Naples and St. Petersburg, Boston and New-Orleans. There are still some districts in Europe, in Holland, Italy, Switzerland, and France, where the inhabitants take a pride in maintaining their ancient dresses;—some of these are extremely pleasing, others highly grotesque. The women, of all ranks, at Caux, in Normandy, wear a head-dress at least a yard in height, by the aid of wires, gauze, ribands, and their own hair. In Friesland, the female attire, though arranged with great art, is in the highest degree absurd and ludicrous; and the same may be said of many other places. These preposterous dresses add much to the amusement of the traveller;—they illustrate the barbarous taste of the times in which they originated,—but offer nothing to be imitated. I am here tempted to mention a visionary scheme that has sometimes

passed in my mind ; and as it will procure you a laugh, though at my expense, I am willing to communicate it. You must have often smiled at the deterioration which these European fashions suffer, by going through so many hands, most of them unskilful ones. These ill-made dresses appear the worse, from the gaudy materials of which they are composed ; and silk and muslin attract a cruel attention, where homelier articles would pass without observation. Now, suppose our ladies were to resolve on a permanent peculiarity of costume, which should be subject to no change or deviation :—would not great advantages result from it ?—Let me allude to some of them.

In the first place, the general taste is now very good, and the facilities for consulting the best standards, extensive and entire. There is no danger that any Gothic extravagance, any cumbersome excrescences, or any bigoted prejudices, will interfere to produce deformity. It would not do to adopt a dress for a whole state ;—this would produce too much uniformity,—but let it be marked by counties. Suppose two or three ladies from each town should form a committee, to agree upon a dress for their county,—woollen for winter, and cotton for summer ; the pattern should be chosen that would best answer the purpose of convenience and symmetry : the bonnet and shoes, as well as the style of cap for the matron ; of the hair for young women, would be regulated on the same principles. In having these forms once fixed, the mantua-makers

would soon become more expert in making the clothes to fit, since that would be their only object, and not to attempt to imitate or invent new fancies. In one county the colour might be blue; in another, brown, purple, green, &c. with simple trimmings of a suitable colour, to form a harmonious contrast with them. The bonnet would be straw, black, or the natural colour, with ribands to accord with the dress, and in any of those forms which would be most convenient and graceful. We should then never encounter a figure with green shoes, black stockings, a blue gown, and yellow bonnet, or any of those luckless attempts at display of fancy, which we sometimes meet, in the country and the town. Immense sums would be annually saved, that are now employed in foreign productions, and every family might lay out these savings in objects of substantial comfort, in improving their farms, or in education of a higher kind. The materials of which the clothes would be composed, are of our own growth, wool and cotton. There would be nothing needed from abroad, except the ribands, and these would soon come to be made here. Our own manufacturers would be encouraged, because, when the article was once in permanent demand, and without capricious variation, they could soon bring it to perfection, to the exclusion of foreign competition. If the principal families in every county consented to this arrangement, and agreed never to wear any other dress, except when they went out of the state, it would soon become a matter of pride, and a point of hon-

our, to appear in their own peculiar costume. A distinction would be made by those who could afford it, which would not be offensive, because it would be less obvious, by wearing the same uniform dress, of finer texture. This would do away the envy and ruinous competition, that now takes so much from laborious earnings.

I have slightly alluded to some of the incidental advantages, that might result from a voluntary regulation of dress, such as economy, encouragement of our own manufactures, &c.; but these are trifles;—the grand advantage is, that women would look better, and their charms would be better displayed. You will say, perhaps, that this might be the case with some, but how can it be with all? Take a regiment with uniform, or without, individually, or in a body,—which looks best? Even the most ordinary are helped by the uniform dress, while those who are superior, acquire greater brilliancy from it. Yet, it is in vain to propose such a scheme; the age is sophistical, and you are infected with its spirit. Formerly, women dressed to please men,—but this simple, natural, honest motive has gone by. They now dress to please one another; their costume is as full of *concetti* as Italian poetry; no man can understand it; nor do you consider us at all; you dress to excite admiration or envy in your own sex, and it is their remarks, or their suffrage, that you attend to. There are a thousand futile, expensive nothings in embroidery, &c. that go to make it up, and which none but a milliner

can appreciate. It would require less expense and less time to please men, and the purpose would be more natural and more generous ; but it is in vain to repine ; we must submit in this, as in many other things, to the power of fashion.

To return from this digression ;—some of the advantages possessed by females in the labouring class, are also felt by those next above them ; but as you rise in the scale of property, the disparity between the lot of women here and in Europe, is much less perceptible ; though the prospect that opens before them, of advancing themselves or their children, is still the same. However humble may be the pursuit of the parents, their children, if gifted with talent, may, with suitable education, look forward to the highest distinctions. This produces some abortive attempts to quit their sphere, some murmuring at discomfiture ; the good still predominates ; a wider field for the selection of talent is opened ; constant exertion is excited ; a wholesome rivalry is kept alive, and in the growth of society the universal tendency is upwards.

The last fifty years, which have so prodigiously advanced the improvement of society every where, has also witnessed a most salutary change in the education of women. In the days of our grandmothers, it was an amiable and rare accomplishment to be able to spell correctly and write legibly ; nay, it was even considered in some countries derogatory to rank to be able to write well, which was thought to be only suited to authors, clerks, or similar sub-

altern employments. Grimm, in his Memoirs, gives a very amusing specimen of the gross ignorance of orthography in the famous Marshal Saxe, worthy of his illustrious station ; and the ignorance of the Marshal was common to the higher ranks in his day. Fashions change with time ; what would be held disgraceful now, was vaunted then. As the Parisian hairdresser, who, just previous to the Revolution, boasted to a traveller, whose hair he was bringing into fashionable shape, “that though he was nothing but a poor barber, yet he had no more religion than the best philosopher of them all ;” so many a tradesman might boast, that he could not write any better than the greatest nobleman about the court.—“Heaven first taught letters for some wretch’s aid,”—but the boon was long imperfectly known ; very serious concerns were necessarily intrusted to the fidelity of a third person ; and if an impatient lover received a *billet musque* he could hardly tell whether the hieroglyphics it contained, conveyed love or hatred.

The reform in this respect commenced with men, after it became evident, that if rank had the power to save vice from contempt, it could not shield ignorance. When it was proposed to extend the advantages of education to the other sex, a strong opposition was raised ; which though it has been obliged to cede point after point, still maintains itself within narrowed limits. Those women even, who had been brought up in ‘the good, old fashion way,’—were many of them desirous that their

daughters should be as ignorant as themselves. Men, whose wives had more sense than their lords, still asserted their own superiority, because they had more learning; but if women could construe a line in Virgil, or go through a process in arithmetic, as well as themselves, this high-minded superiority would be destroyed. All who were attached to the abuse from habit or profit, were, as usual, sturdy in its defence. But these efforts are in vain on a great scale, or where any general question is involved. The spirit of improvement, which was called into vigour by the invention of printing, has been gaining ground with an increasing ratio ever since. We may as well attempt to stop the passage of the light which has not yet reached us from remote stars, as to arrest its progress; it will penetrate to the darkest corners in time.

It sickens the heart to consider the monstrous extent, to which the selfishness of mankind will carry abuses. One body will contend that a whole nation shall be degraded, that they may enjoy an hereditary superiority; another, that the people shall not be taught to read, lest they should learn that their condition might be improved; another, that they shall not have a Bible, for fear they might be puzzled in reconciling what is taught, with what was commanded. This same feeling existed among many narrow-minded men, respecting the education of women; they would keep them ignorant, in order to give to their own attainments an arrogant superiority; or if they taught them any thing

else than household affairs, it would be some showy accomplishment :—To instruct their minds ? to teach them to think ? No, that was to be deprecated. Men with this slight modification of Turkish spirit, commonly employ arguments that are worthy of its views ; yet even good arguments will not long support false views. If there was formerly much time wasted in the education of boys, by an improper distribution of studies, it was vastly worse with respect to girls ; whole years of their time were thrown away in the repetition of the most insignificant pursuits, or in attaining excellence in tedious futilities. Each sex has some studies that are appropriate ; girls need not learn fencing ; they can reach our hearts without it ; nor a boy embroidery, even though he should employ his skill, like Ferdinand of Spain, on a petticoat for the Virgin ; yet there are many studies that may be common to both, the pursuit of which will have a useful influence in assimilating their taste, multiplying their sympathies, elevating their character, and increasing their happiness. It is singularity only that should be avoided, except under rare and peculiar circumstances. If but one girl in a town could construe Latin, or tell the composition of atmospheric air, it might make her very unhappy, or ridiculous, or both ; but when this instruction is more generally diffused, it ceases to create vanity, or to give rise to a taunting, painful notoriety.

The children of both sexes enjoy equally the advantage of our common schools. There are,

besides, many academies and private schools for females exclusively, besides boarding-schools in and near the large towns. In some of these the course of instruction runs high, and is accompanied by what are commonly called accomplishments. In many instances the girls are taught Latin, not that it is of much consequence to them to know that language, or that they are expected to follow the steps of Madame Dacier ; but as grammar is every where taught, they can acquire a knowledge of the general principles from the Latin grammar, in a more amusing way, than by the study of the English one ; and even a slight insight into the Latin, facilitates considerably the acquisition of French and Italian, which form an important part of an accomplished education. There are examples among our females of very considerable proficiency, in more than one of the learned languages ; and in those I have known, this knowledge has not made them pedantic ; nor did they seem to perform the ordinary duties of domestic life the worse, though they knew that the *Æneid* was written in Latin, and the *Iliad* in Greek, and could translate a passage from either.

The advantages of giving a superior education to women, are not confined to themselves, but have a salutary influence on our sex. The fear, that increased instruction will render them incompetent or neglectful in domestic life, is absurd in theory, and completely destroyed by facts. Women, as well as men, when once established in life, know that

there is an end of trifling ; its solitudes and duties multiply upon them equally fast ; the former are apt to feel them much more keenly, and too frequently abandon all previous acquirements, to devote themselves wholly to these. But if your sex have cultivated and refined minds, mine must meet them from shame, if not from sympathy. If a man finds that his wife is not a mere nurse or a housekeeper ; that she can, when the occupations of the day are over, enliven a winter's evening ; that she can converse on the usual topics of literature, and enjoy the pleasures of superior conversation, or the reading of a valuable book, he must have a perverted taste, indeed, if it does not make home still dearer, and prevent him from resorting to taverns for recreation. The benefits to her children need not be mentioned ; instruction and cultivated taste in a mother, enhance their respect and affection for her and their love of home, and throw a charm over the whole scene of domestic life.

These effects are widely shown, especially in that numerous class who have received a good education, but whose moderate fortune or retired residence, keeps them from mixing in the gayeties and crowded circles of fashionable life. The charms of literature are here a useful equivalent for less quiet amusements. Indeed an acquaintance with the literature of the day is at least affected by every one ; and a new work, or a new Review, is the common topic of conversation in every party. In contemporaneous literature, women are perhaps

greater readers than men, and often quite as good judges, though less confident in giving their opinions. The common subjects of chat with young men in the society of your sex, are the merits of a new work ; they sometimes, at the risk of a little silent ridicule, volunteer instruction, in a tone of condescension to those who have much more delicacy and tact in judging than their kind instructors : this, however, promotes amusement, and ladies are amply gratified ; for they, unlike the Turkish women, have

“ Many bustling Rotherbys, to show ’em
The finest passage in the last new poem.”

The manners of our women in the leading ranks of society, are highly pleasing. They are gentle, refined, simple, affectionate. When intimately known, they will, I think, bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other country. They are not perfect, indeed ;—mind I am speaking generally ;—but they leave little to desire. That little, perhaps, would be a greater degree of confidence, the shaking off that timidity, which communicates embarrassment, suppresses too much the expression of emotion, and sometimes the promptitude to render little services, which they would gladly perform. This also makes them rather too retiring ; the married women become too suddenly matronal ; are too apt to shrink from the task—the word is used confidentially—of amusing and being amused in society ; and leaving it to young girls, who are less

competent to keep conversation from becoming insipid or inane.

It is difficult to compare our women with those of France or England, because their manners, as well as their dress, resemble neither entirely, but partake considerably of both. Their dress is less foppish and extravagant than the French; less crude and fanciful than the English. Their manners are less artificial and sparkling than the former; less bold and decided than the latter. The crowds and the vices of the great European cities produce a degree of impudence in men in high life; in their mode of staring at, and examining the appearance of women. This, which, when it occurs here, excites downright alarm, is met in France by a coquettish shrinking; in England by a passive defiance. An American is immediately struck with manners to which he is so unaccustomed, and will perhaps be more confounded at the defensive, and sometimes offensive, stare of a woman of high ton, than any thing else he can encounter.

In regard to beauty, I am too much under immediate influence to be impartial in regard to distant claims; and you will perhaps think, knowing how wholly I am subdued—that any thing said for transatlantic pretensions, may be a feeble attempt to escape from thralldom, which after all it would be painful to renounce. The American women, though their manners are almost as different as their language from the French, resemble them more in some respects, and would be more easily as-

simulated with them than with the English. A personage of very high rank in England, who had seen in society, three or four times, two of our country women, who were sisters, inquired, "who are those two little Frenchwomen?" And most persons would make the same mistake with respect to American women in England, especially those, whom they should meet in the circles of fashionable life. Our women have the advantage over the French women in complexion, but have a less lively expression; the English women have perhaps still finer complexions than ours, but the texture of their skin is coarser, which diminishes the air of feminine softness, that is common both to French and American women. The English women are more robust than either of the others; their temperate climate enables them to take more exercise; they are, generally speaking, a stouter race; their frames are larger, and they have a stronger and more substantial appearance. Compared with English, or even French ladies, ours have an air of languor, and a slowness in their movements and talking, which you know in the southern states is carried to excess. Vivacity and readiness are the characteristic traits of the French; alacrity and energy those of the English; and languor and softness those of our women. Vivacity forms the greatest contrast with the general manners of the last; a languishing air with those of the two former; hence a common object of affectation with French and English women, is to put on an air of sentimental

or voluptuous languor ; with ours to assume a tone of sprightliness.

The comparison between our ladies and those of the middle states, I am unable to make with any degree of precision. The shades of difference must, of course, be very slight and delicate, and I have not studied them enough to make the description distinct. There is a much greater mixture of foreign manners in New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, than exists here ;—their ladies dress more, and perhaps better than ours. They make a display in the streets, particularly in New-York, which is never done with us ; nor would any persons, except mere spectators, wish to see the custom introduced. The excessive sobriety of the Quaker costume, and a more true taste, have simplified the walking costume, and, indeed, all others in Philadelphia ; and it is, I believe, generally admitted, that women dress better there, than in any other of our cities. Female dress here, used to be too homely at one time, and too gaudy at another ; both these extremes have been corrected, and if, on some occasions, a little more elegance might be indulged, without extravagance, it is generally what is decent and suitable,—neither sinning through parsimony and neglect, nor by ostentation and expense.

There is one remark on a peculiarity of manners, which I make with less reluctance, as I know my opinion accords with your's. In Philadelphia and New-York, there is sometimes seen a decided, avowed intention at display, and a confidence in

aiming to be conspicuous, in young girls, which is any thing but engaging. At a ball, or in a large assembly, they talk and laugh loud, and get a circle round them ; and the ambition to be what is called a dashing belle, leads to the very confines of romping. I have often been amused at observing the expression in the countenance of a foreigner, which is produced by the utter confusion of ideas, such conduct creates in his mind. The mothers are to blame. They push their daughters forward prematurely, and encourage them to assume a leading tone, which they have not experience enough to support with dignity or safety. The most interesting and delightful of all objects, a brilliant, fine, young woman, loses half her loveliness, when she is seen presuming, openly, on her attractions, in a crowded circle, and using, with boldness, all the arts of rivalry, to maintain pre-eminence. This fashion has not yet encroached upon the primitive reserve of our manners ; and (though for somewhat different reasons) would not be tolerated here, any more than in Europe.

You must not think me harsh in censuring, or that I mistake the grounds of this levity. Our young women are in the situation, in which Innocence is represented by the allegory to have been, in the golden age, when she walked forth, accompanied with Courage and Confidence, while Guilt was attended with Bashfulness and Fear. As the world grew worse, they changed companions,—and long may it be, ere the corruption of our manners shall render the exchange necessary here. Let all

the playfulness, all the vivacity that youth and happiness can produce, be discovered among familiar friends; let no unreasonable check be given to this; we have hardly enough of it, either for the health of mind or body; but let us beware of inducing our young girls to an ostentation of gayety in public, or attempting to usurp supremacy in a ball-room. It leads them too immediately under the dominion of the giddy, or the corrosive passions; it makes them the victims of vanity or envy.

No one can be insensible of the invaluable blessings which arise from a state of society, where young girls can be thus protected; and where even many of those who have fluttered the gayest in the circles of fashion, renounce every amusement as soon as they are married, to devote themselves wholly to the duties and solicitude of domestic life. No one can wish to see our girls shut up in convents, or kept under severe restraint; our married women become coquettes, and our young men *ca-valieri servente*. But there are many intermediate stages. Married women too readily renounce all exertion in society, which is apt to become insipid to them, when they are once engaged in the serious cares of life. Yet these need not be neglected, though social intercourse be maintained; the habit of the latter, on the contrary, will alleviate the burden of the former. To engage in both, however, requires exertion; and, perhaps, there may be some foundation for the reproach of indolence, where either is disregarded.

The pleasures of society are certainly lessened, even if no other injury results to those who partake of it; when they, whose characters are formed, and whose standing is fixed, recede too soon, or too much, from giving a direction to conversation and amusement. If they abandon this almost wholly to girls, the general characteristics of every gay circle must become more light and frivolous. Girls can neither have the experience nor the confidence to sustain any general conversation, that takes other topics than the merest trifles; and the happy propensity of their time of life, to mere frolic and playfulness, renders it necessary to introduce suitable companions. Boys are then brought forward, prematurely, and where they are intruded, there is an end of all etiquette, of that deference and courtesy, which form the charm of large parties. There are some who think that our fashionable assemblies have deteriorated in this way.

I have already dilated on the advantages which your sex enjoy in education here. There are few villages to be seen, where there are not several men who have received a collegiate education. Their conversation, their books, and their instruction, have had an influence on the education of females. A facility afforded to those who wanted to go a little beyond what they were taught at school, and the difficulty of procuring masters for polite accomplishments, has given them more leisure for reading, and made them endeavour to compensate for

any deficiency in lighter attainments, by more solid information.

This state of things is very unlike what exists in the middle states, where the institutions for education were in former times too much neglected, and where the sons even of wealthy people, received little more than the commonest school education. The perverse fanaticism of the Quakers, who had formerly a preponderating influence, and who, on a system of sobriety, industry, integrity and neatness, taught only the great art of thriving in the world, and proscribed all other kinds of knowledge; in the endeavour to give the same drab or russet hue to their minds, which they had done to their garments, produced an unfortunate neglect of all intellectual cultivation. If the boys were only taught to read, write, and cipher, the girls must be content with a lower degree of instruction in these accomplishments. In short, if the latter could read their Bibles, and calculate a domestic bargain, their mental instruction was completed.

Fortunately this state of education has been improved of late years; even the Quakers begin to find that learning is not sinful; and that their sect must either keep pace with the spirit of the age, or sink into insignificance;—as there is an end of persecution, they have no other mode of maintaining their corps, or attaching any high respectability to themselves. While the mind was thus neglected, the personal appearance was improved, and graceful manners widely diffused. The influence of the

Quakers was here partially useful. Those females of their sect, who did not feel the importance of that part of religion, which consisted in wearing an ill-shaped, ugly coloured gown, or a queer little bonnet, preposterously prim, chose a more becoming and less affected costume. Their former habits, and a wish to avoid too glaring a departure from their friends, still inclined them to the Quaker simplicity,—only, instead of its uncomeliness, substituting elegance. The influence of a large city was also felt; and as Philadelphia acquired a distinguished society while it was the seat of government, which it has never wholly lost; an air of gracefulness, and the tone of fashionable life, was given to their principal circles, and which, like every thing else in this country, was readily imitated, and widely diffused. The same advantages were wanting here, and a less uniform turn, less appearance of the fashionable drill, more of a militia character of dress and movement, were prevalent. In short, you will sometimes meet there, under a very fashionable dress and manner, a most composing degree of ignorance: you will often find here much mental acquirement, under an exterior of consummate awkwardness and timidity.

I am afraid I have tired you; but you encountered this risk when you gave me permission to write. I could still linger near this subject, if my letter was not growing to a volume. It is one, on which, though a constant observer, I am but an indifferent critic. You know the reason,—the

——— "allegiance and fast fealty
Which I do owe unto all woman kynd."

Would that they had an abler champion—they cannot have a more respectful admirer.

P. S. You speak of your 'enemies.'—I think you must be mistaken. I cannot conceive that you should have any. If, however, it be so, I will repeat the laconic prayer of a zealous clergyman, during the war; "may they be soon brought to reason, or to ruin."

LETTER IX.

AGRICULTURE.

I KNOW of nothing, my dear Sir, that is a subject for more real congratulation than the attention recently given to agriculture, and the spirit for improving it, that is pervading every district in the Union. It was indeed quite time for this disposition to show itself. The truth will be less painful now, since we have begun to amend; but certainly there was no country, where greater ignorance, or

greater neglect of this science, could be witnessed, than in the United States. This was owing to different causes, in different parts of the country. In the south and the west, the proprietors held land enough to persist in bad management, for two or three generations; an exuberant soil produced abundant crops, without artificial enrichment or very heavy labour; when one field was exhausted, another was cleared, and tilled to poverty in its turn. This kind of farming so impoverished the country in some of the older districts, that the inhabitants were at length left to choose between emigration to a new region, or the employment of greater care and skill on their old farms: too many of them perhaps preferred the former. In this quarter a less fertile soil always demanded more labour; yet few attempts were made to go out of the common routine of a very restricted cultivation, and the inclination was almost universal, to devote all their skill and capital to some of the branches of trade; considering all exertions to derive a greater profit from agriculture, as hopeless. The spirit of emigration also, acting with full force on an enterprising people, easily induced them to go to new states, in pursuit of the real or delusive advantages that were held out to them. This constant draining from our population, while it afforded a hardy, vigorous race for the cultivation of new territories; may have produced a greater increase to the ultimate good and power of the nation, than would have happened if these emigrants had remained stationary; still it occa-

sioned some local disadvantages. In the first place, it prevented the inhabitants from thinking of any improvement; if their farm was not sufficiently productive, the easy remedy to a restless people was to sell it, collect their effects and go five or fifteen hundred miles (the distance, greater or less, was not thought of) in pursuit of a richer soil. It was not by the employment of greater skill, but by a change of location, that they sought to improve their condition. Improvement was discouraged in another way, not by the high rate of wages, which this facility of obtaining new lands had a tendency to maintain; (high wages are a gain to the community at large;) but by keeping our population always scattered and thin, it prevented the means of bringing together, occasionally, a large body of labourers, which is sometimes very important for the security of crops in extended cultivation.

There are two things that have been injurious to the agriculture of the United States; one of which may be remedied in time; the other will always continue. The first, is the occupation of too much land, so that the labour applied to it can only produce a very imperfect tillage; the other, is the irregularity of the climate: this is every where felt; in the eastern states it is an untimely frost in June; in the southern it is the same accident in March, that injures the respective crops of these different territories; our geographical, and atmospherical position, if I may use the expression, will always subject us to these evils. But it is the consideration of

these unfavourable circumstances, in this quarter only, that comes within my purpose. With regard to the land, there is hardly a farm where the quantity of ground in tillage, is not too much for the strength that is to be employed upon it; hence, not only the labour, but the manure are diffused over too large a surface.

The evil consequences are not only immediate, in giving a less amount of produce in each year, but a permanent gain is prevented. If the farmer, who now tills ten acres, were to confine his efforts to eight, his harvest would not only be equal the present year, but the prospective value of his farm would be enhanced. A more complete tilth and a heavier stock of manure upon the diminished space, would leave it, after the crop was taken, more mellow and in better heart. If two farmers were selected, who should possess about the same degree of industry, skill, and means for labour, and who should proceed in their cultivation on lands of the same quality, one of them stirring more surface than the other; I have no hesitation in believing, that he who cultivated one-fifth or one quarter less in quantity, would, besides having an equal harvest annually, find at the end of ten years, that his farm was worth double that of his competitor. The evil in question is so radical and extensive, that its bad consequences cannot be too often pointed out: though it is the most obvious, and has been most frequently remarked upon, it is still almost universal.

With regard to our climate, the greatest evil is its uncertainty ; in other respects, it may be as favourable to agriculture, as most others. It is true, the long continuance of winter, by depriving cattle of pasturage, and by interrupting a great deal of agricultural labour, which must all be crowded into the remaining part of the year, is a serious inconvenience ; but then compare it with countries that escape this evil, and you will find them without the ripening warmth of our summers, and drenched with rain and fogs in the autumn and early part of winter, when we are blessed with clear skies, and a fine temperature. The accidents we are liable to from late springs and late frosts, are a peculiar evil, which we shall never escape, but which we may provide against much better than we do now. This evil is felt most by the farmer in the cultivation of Indian corn. A late spring throws him too far into the summer ; a late frost sometimes cuts him off altogether. Yet, if raising the plants in a hot-bed, and then transplanting them, could be practised successfully, both these evils would be remedied ; but such has been our supineness with regard to agricultural improvement, that I doubt if the experiment has ever been tried decisively.

The facilities every where afforded to our citizens for engaging in trade, and the great profits that for a considerable period accrued from it ; fostered a general inclination to place all their means in this pursuit, rather than in agriculture ; of late years at least this has been a very unprofitable course to many. The attention of intelligent and enterpris-

ing men, was thus diverted from their farms to other concerns; no attempts were made at improvement; no man thought of wasting his skill upon agriculture. Very little attention was paid to the breed of cattle or horses; the making of butter and cheese was miserably neglected, since it was found that, however bad it might be, a market would be procured for it. The routine of cultivation at least, preserved the primitive simplicity of our puritan forefathers. A field of Indian corn, with a border of potatoes, a few fields of the small grains, turned at intervals into grass lands, formed the whole system; and the only part of this that was performed with neatness and care, was the cultivation of Indian corn. This commonly received two or three ploughings and hoeings, was kept free from weeds; and this plant filled the only fields, that were an exception to the general neglect and ignorance of agriculture. No root crops were thought of for the sustenance of animals: indeed, with the exception of working oxen, if the others were kept from starving through the winter, the farmer was satisfied, and each year was made to balance its own accounts. In a plentiful one, all that was raised was consumed; and if a little waste was necessary to effect this purpose, it was readily resorted to. The abundance of one season was not calculated upon to supply the deficiencies of the next: if there was a large crop of corn, the oxen, pigs, and turkeys were somewhat fatter; and if there was any hay left through the winter, it was considered a nuisance;

old hay being held to be poor stuff. It would have been difficult to find ten farmers in a county, who ever looked forward to blend the operations of two or three years together. In an unfavourable season they exerted themselves to make the two ends meet, by keeping their stock alive; but the bounty of a prosperous one was thrown away, except that the cattle fared better, and therefore yielded something more to the owner. That this was the general state of our agriculture, and that too much of it still continues the same, no one who knows it can deny. The only exceptions are the farmers who raised roots in some places for exportation, and the market gardeners in the vicinity of one or two large towns.

Even the attempts that were made at improvement, were cited as evidence against the possibility of deriving any thing from farming. An experimentalist, having surrounded his fields with expensive fences, erected spacious, showy barns, planted orchards, and when once planted, considered that work as done; would cultivate his farm without much economy of labour, but a sparing use of manures, especially those of a permanent nature; and finding his whole produce to consist of a few tons of hay, a few bushels of corn and potatoes, would assure you, from his own knowledge, which he had paid dearly for, that it was impossible to derive any thing from farming. So a few years since, when a sudden mania took possession of the public about the merino sheep; and a man thought he had nothing to do but to buy a flock of merinos, give a

hundred dollars a piece for them, and send them to a farm, under the charge of a man who knew nothing about their management, aided, however, by his neighbours's dogs ; the result was cited with a significant look, or a knowing remark, as showing the folly of attempting to derive any thing from farming in this country.

Among the advantages which the farmer possesses, the first may be considered, his exemption from rent, tithes and burthensome taxes. The land is subjected to no species of feudal imposition ; the common tenure is in fee simple, and there is no rent, unless the interest of the purchase money, which is small, can be so considered. There are no tithes ;—religion and education are, to be sure, supported every where,—but at a very moderate expense, since nothing can be exacted by luxury ; and each individual pays his contribution to what sect he chooses. There are no burdensome taxes : those which would be most so, the militia, and highway labours, are lightened by being paid in personal service, at the most convenient seasons ;—an intelligent and free people, who voluntarily impose these duties upon themselves, know that they are essential, the one to the common good, and the other to the preservation of their rights. The wages of labour are, indeed, high ;—what goes in Europe to the exactions of the government, is here retained by the labourer, whose strength is sustained by plentiful nourishment, and who is enabled to lay up something from his earnings.

The next advantage is, that he supplies the dearest market in the world, with great facilities for getting to it. There being no check, no limit whatever, to exportation, the prices of the main articles of food are regulated here, not by the wants and supplies of the country, but by the general wants of the world. The commerce in grain being wholly unrestricted, a bad season in Europe is a premium to the farmer here; and the fact has been, that we have always paid a higher price for bread than has been paid in Europe. This main article of food regulates all the rest. But another instance may be cited, which proves how advantageous a market our farmers possess for their produce;—I believe it will be found, on examination, that the price of hay has been as high in Boston, and elsewhere in proportion, for a series of years, as it has been in London.

An advantage to the farmer, individually, and a very important benefit in its general results, is owing to the use of oxen, instead of horses, in almost all agricultural labour. This practice has been recommended in other countries, with no great success. The strength, the patience, the docility of these animals, are admirable,—and from the universal habit of using them, it may be supposed they are managed with great adroitness. Yet, in many places, the whip is made use of, in driving them, though the goad is the true instrument. It is an amusing thing to observe a skilful teamster, with two yoke of good oxen, which constitutes the common force

of a team, manœuvring them where any considerable effort, or nicety in driving, is necessary ;—each ox has his own name, and much is done by the tones of voice, in alternately threatening, entreating, and encouraging the animals ; who, in spite of their clumsy appearance, when it is necessary to make way in a narrow, difficult road, are more manageable than horses. A gentleman from a distant state, who had passed the summer among us, on his return, met, at a very narrow place in the road, a waggon, with a team of oxen. It seemed impossible to pass ; as he discovered some uneasiness, his coachman, whose mind had been deeply impressed with what he had seen of the management of oxen, told him ; “ O, Sir, there is no danger ; these oxen know a great deal more than our people at home.” In fact, after various ejaculations, which none but the oxen could understand, a due degree of backing and advancing, the waggon was at last adjusted, so that the carriage might pass,—greatly to the admiration of its owner. After a life of labour, this valuable creature, when killed, is worth at least his first cost to his owner ;—while the horse, supposing the cost of supporting him and his labour to have been the same, is entirely worthless.

A prospective advantage, of great importance to this whole section, is, that the best lands, even in the cultivated and populous districts, with the exception of the intervale on the banks of rivers, are yet to be reclaimed. There are tens of thousands of acres of wet, swampy lands, that may be easily

and cheaply drained, that are now wholly without value, except in the supply of firewood, which is generally of slow growth, and inferior quality. These low grounds, sufficiently elevated, however, to be almost every where susceptible of being completely drained, so that in many cases they might be used for the planting of corn are commonly composed of a rich, deep soil, the deposit from the neighbouring uplands. When so far cleared as to produce their natural grasses, the growth is so coarse, that it is hardly worth the trouble of curing ; while the same lands, if drained, and sowed with the cultivated grasses, would give the heaviest crops of the most valuable hay. A considerable quantity of rich upland, which is now devoted to this purpose, would then be liberated for the purposes of tillage. Besides, these moist meadows are certain in their produce, and in dry seasons, when the grass on the uplands hardly yields a quantity worth mowing, would give a rich harvest. The grasses, too, which soon run out on dry lands, in a moist, deep soil, may be considered permanent. A good many spots have been thus converted, within a few years, from producing mere useless weeds, to the finest sward of nutritious grasses ; and increasing attention is given to these neglected grounds. Those who have examined the surface of the country, know, that there is a much greater proportion of these lands than would be at first imagined, which are capable of being easily brought into use, and changed from the most worthless, to the most valuable land in the country.

There is another description of land, of which very large tracts are found on every part of the sea-coast, which is a reproach to our agricultural management. I allude to the salt marshes. These are generally composed of a fat, rich soil, often several feet in depth. At present they produce a crop of hay, which is worth only half the price of the upland produce. Attempts have been made in many places to dyke out the sea-water ; in some few the most luxuriant crops have followed ; in most others, the natural grasses have been destroyed, the land run to waste, and after a few years, the salt water has been again admitted to cover them. Doubtless, the growth they furnish, the depth of soil, and other circumstances, may make some of these lands more difficult to be reclaimed than others. But, I doubt whether most of the experiments have been well conducted, and whether they have not failed from being made imperfectly. Though the tide has been kept from overflowing the surface, the water within has been too near its level, to permit the soil being properly freshened. Thousands and thousands of acres of land in England, that were once overflowed by the tide, have been embanked, and now produce the richest crops. In Flanders and Holland, half the country must have been originally in this situation ; and lands now below the level of the tides produce not only the finest hay, but are cultivated with vegetables and grain. Some of the richest lands we have might be made to do the same here, and would afford the

largest returns, instead of a sorry crop of salt hay. It is a prominent object in our agriculture, that a full experiment, on a large scale, should be made with these valuable and extensive tracts.

The prosperity of our agriculture will be greatly promoted by the agricultural societies, recently established, and whose influence has been already shown. It is in a great degree owing to such societies, that Great Britain has made such advances in agriculture within the last sixty years. The agricultural skill in many parts of that magnificent island, is fully equal, if not superior, to what is displayed in Lombardy and Flanders, the finest cultivated regions in Europe. These societies will be here, as they have been there, the patrons of various experiments : from the success of some of these, and even the failure of others, very essential improvements will result. They rouse the attention of farmers, they collect and diffuse information, and they excite an emulation, that animates the whole agricultural interest.

Their influence, undervalued by many, regarded with indifference by more, is fully appreciated by only a few. Yet they have already furnished indications of the benefits that will flow from them ; and the early and rapid improvement of our long neglected agriculture, has followed their establishment. Many persons mistake the object of them, by a very narrow view of their proceedings ; they can see no advantage in giving a prize for an ox or a wether, too fat to be eaten, or a cumbrous growth

on a single acre. Yet these are extremes, little more than curiosities in themselves, that show the limits of capability. But it is the instruction they afford, the emulation they create, that constitute their utility. By showing the extent of what can be done, they excite exertion every where. They make the farmer ashamed of being so far inferior to his successful neighbour ; they make him anxious to recede from the opposite extreme of poverty and meanness. If he finds that a man in the same county can raise sixty bushels, where he gets only ten, he resolves at least that he will have twenty. If he finds that one of his neighbours has reared an ox that weighs two thousand five hundred pounds, he will try to carry his from a thousand to twelve or fifteen hundred. The extraordinary efforts that obtain the prizes, serve to show what is possible, and place in strong contrast the disadvantage of bad breeds and imperfect tillage. Every feeling of pride and interest is stimulated to make improvements, and amelioration is every where diffused.

The competition thus produced, is perhaps nowhere more remarkable, or more beneficial, than in the improvement it causes in all kinds of live stock. Poor cows, feeble oxen, sorry horses, lank lean hogs, coarse wooled, bad shaped sheep, consume as much food, and yield one-third or one quarter as much profit, as others of select improved breeds. A poor man, who keeps but a single cow, or a single pig, may partake of this improvement ; while, to the larger farmer, it is in itself sufficient to make all

the difference between a productive and unproductive estate. Great attention has been paid in this department, by all the agricultural societies in England; and there is no country that affords such striking and admirable proofs of what may be done by improving the breeds of animals. We are beginning to make a progress in this way; several fine animals, from the most improved European stocks, have been imported; and the profit of having the best kind of stock is getting to be universally understood. We were indeed far from being destitute of valuable stock, particularly in neat cattle and swine. The spirit of improvement leads to the selection of the finest among these, and to raising only those which have the requisite qualities for being productive. Aided by the imported animals, which come from the most perfect breeds in Europe, we may calculate, in a very few years, to exhibit generally, the finest kinds of live stock.

It is the natural consequence of these societies to attract attention to agricultural pursuits; this produces as much advantage as their specific objects. It is not merely the local benefit that is produced by prizes, and cattle shows, by a superior piece of cultivation, or a better breed of animals; but it is the increased interest, that is given to the occupation of farming. This is particularly valuable among us, where agriculture had been so much neglected, both as a source of profit or employment. Commercial concerns, in all their branches, were the principal subjects of conversation; they brought

men together, and became popular, not only from the expectation of greater gains, but because their interests were the chief objects of attention, and drew within their sphere all active minds. Agriculture was not upon a scale large enough to attract notice ;—it was almost wholly carried on by people with small means ; for every man, as he obtained any property, embarked in trade or banking, and did not think of going beyond the simplest exertions in tillage. As there was no strong interest excited from the magnitude of the operations, so there was no pride to be gratified from successful experiment and superior management. An inferior station in any of the professions, a subaltern connexion with trade, raised higher expectations, and obtained a preference over the occupation of a farmer. The effect of these societies does much to counteract and remedy this evil ;—in the first place, by showing that it is a science in which great skill may be discovered, and which will afford constant occupation to the mind ; and where the products are so prodigiously varied according to the management, that if it only gives a bare subsistence in most cases, it may, in others, make a greater return, than can be got on the average of ordinary times, from capital employed in trade. In the next place, it draws attention, it creates sympathy, it flatters the love of distinction, that is natural to all men ; which, when thus directed, is, to the public at large, as well as the individual, a salutary vanity. Men who are sufficiently favoured by circum-

stances to select their own course of employment, will be more apt to go into one, for which a fellow-feeling exists in the community,—when the expectation of profit is in some degree ennobled by a generous competition, that engages not only the public sentiment, but promotes the public weal. When emulation is once turned to this kind of improvement, its effects are so obvious, they are so pleasing, from the manner in which they adorn and display the country, that the pursuit is a constant source of satisfaction. The growth of trees, the giving a neat appearance to fields, the reclaiming a rough, savage spot, the making the wilderness to blossom, become at once the most alluring, and the most beneficent of all employments.

A great advantage follows from having men of property scattered over the country, who take an interest in agricultural concerns. Such men are able to take the risk of doing things on a large scale, and if the true definition of economy, in this, as in every other case, be a wise expenditure, they set an example, which their neighbours can imitate on a smaller scale. Their experiments, if they are too costly to be immediately profitable, still furnish hints to others, who may take the substantial part of them, and avoid the expense of what is ostentatious. The influence of such men, in promoting refinement of manners, a wider range of intelligence, and larger views of policy, is of incalculable importance to the moral and political interests of society. This is most strikingly shown in En-

gland. The people who fill the higher ranks of the fashionable world, in that country, live in town only for a short season; the rest of the year they are dispersed over every part of the island. Their example and their influence are to be found in every district. They contribute to elevate and enlighten the whole population of the country. The middling classes are prevented from nourishing boorish and coarse dispositions and pleasures,—from being mere Squire Westerns,—as was the case with many of the wealthy farmers, two or three generations back; and they themselves are saved from the degradation of becoming profligate courtiers, or narrow-minded cits. On the Continent, the contrary course was too prevalent; it was the policy of the courts to prevent all the men who were powerful, from rank or property, from exercising a local influence in the provinces; by making them the slaves and dependants of court influence, and intoxicating them with the pleasures of the capital. They retained them constantly near the sovereign, till they held a residence in the country as a painful exile, which, indeed, was used as a punishment. In a conversation, one day, with a distinguished individual, of high rank in the Russian service, and who was familiar with every part of the European continent,—he attributed almost the whole strength and energy of the English nation, to the circumstance of the great proprietors residing so much in the country; and the opposite state of things in this respect, in many other coun-

tries, he considered a radical vice and weakness in their system.

To return from this digression:—the more we can find men of leisure and property devoting their attention to landed estates, and passing a part of the year in the country, enjoying its pleasures, diffusing intelligence and improvement in every district; the more we shall find the solid prosperity, and, above all, the moral character of the people advanced. Let us hope, then, that every individual, who has made his fortune in the city, may have a taste to spend a portion of it in the country. No pursuit is more useful than tilling the earth; none nobler, none more pleasing. But this topic has been often embellished. Let me conclude with the well-known expressions of that illustrious Roman orator, who was too sound a patriot not to give some of his time to agriculture:—*Omnium rerum quibus aliquid exquiritur, nihil est agri cultura melius, nihil uberius, nihil dulcius, nihil homine libero dignius.*

LETTER X.

MANUFACTURES.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE subject of manufactures has been fruitful of discussion in all its branches ; from the previous question of policy, down to the matter of fact one of practicability. There are some folks even who are still doubtful on the first point, though it seemed to be settled by the clear, elaborate report of Hamilton, when Secretary of the Treasury ; but this must always be so ; if there are some men who advance too far beyond their cotemporaries to be of much use, like the twilight that precedes the splendour of day ; there are others who always lag behind the progress of society, like the twilight that is soon extinguished in darkness. Some would deny all encouragement, even that of good-will and cheering approbation for successful efforts ; while others clamour for exclusive privileges, prohibitions, bounties, and a whole system of hot house forcing, that can never produce a vigorous growth. While these debates are going on, while patriotism and avarice are alternately appealed to with every argument that can affect either ; while some still deny that we can ever carry them on with advantage, and others assert

that we can never be independent without them; manufacturers themselves, in spite of their foes, and in some cases of their friends, are every where selecting the most suitable locations, forming solid establishments, and furnishing the disputants themselves with much of the clothing that protects them.

There are several parts of the United States where certain branches of manufactures are permanently fixed, without including those household productions, which are made to a great extent in every state in the Union. It is my purpose only, in answer to your inquiries, to tell you what has been done in the eastern division; to say something of the advantages it possesses for the prosecution of manufactures, and to remark upon some of the objections, that have been urged against them. In doing this, I do not intend to furnish you with details, to tell you the number of spindles or of trip-hammers that we have in motion. I have not the facts necessary for the purpose; I am not making statistical tables, but attempting only a general outline of our capabilities in this way.

We have furnished many proofs of the liability of theorists to make false calculations, and how frequently a successful practice will run counter to the most plausible reasonings of theory. Associations to introduce any particular branch of manufacture rarely succeed; numerous instances may be cited of their failures. Two, among others in Boston, may serve as examples of the rest. The first was an attempt to introduce the manufacture of linen;

Irish spinners and weavers were to be employed; a large, substantial building was erected; but after all the expense, it languished for only a short period before its extinction. Another was a manufactory of sail-cloth. The reasoning here was excellent; it was said that we could produce the hemp which would assist our agriculture; that the great quantity of shipping we employed in the fisheries, in the foreign and coasting trade, would always secure a certain demand; that the fabric was of so coarse a description, that little skill would be required, and it might at once be brought to perfection. The duck was made, and the usual certificates were given, after a fair trial, that by virtue of the kind of oil which was used in the weaving, it was less liable to mildew, and, in short, that it was decidedly superior to the European sail-cloth.—Yet the manufactory soon fell through.—At this very time, though we could not carry on a manufacture of this coarse material, very considerable quantities of thread-lace were made in the county of Essex; and it continued to be woven, till the modern patent lace drove it out of the market.* So it was, contrary to obvious theory, that though we could not make cloth for the fisherman's sails, we did produce the lace-edging for his wife's cap. The manufactory of glass was introduced in the same way, and would probably have failed in turn, if the association had not been given up; and a few only of the proprietors joined with the principal workmen in carrying it on.

* It is said that this manufacture of lace by hand is reviving

These associations, which, owing in part to the great facility of obtaining legislative acts of incorporation, have been remarkably multiplied of late years, make a considerable display of introducing manufactures; but it may be doubted, on the whole, whether they are productive of gain to the community. The stockholders commonly lose, but the people employed obtain their wages; the farmer profits by getting a greater demand for his produce, and some knowledge of manufacturing is obtained by the workmen, which furnishes them another resource for a livelihood. Against these are to be placed the loss of the proprietors, and still more, the discouragement which is produced by unsuccessful attempts.

It might be wise policy in legislatures, in passing acts of incorporation, to imitate the English principle in regard to private banking; where to ensure care and responsibility in the transaction of their affairs, but a limited number of persons, five or six, are allowed to associate together; the consequence is, that each one puts in so much capital; that it becomes the main object of his attention, and his ruin would follow his personal negligence, or misconduct. This principle may perhaps take place in our banking system, in the course of time; but a modification of it might do good in our manufacturing establishments. The number of persons might be limited expressly, or effectively, by making the value of each share much greater than it now is. Manufactures are never exposed, when properly con-

ducted, to the wide chances of commerce ; they can never expect its extravagant gains, or its sudden losses. Their gain is moderate, but certain. The greatest attention to all the details, the closest economy, the constant personal watchfulness of the proprietor, are necessary to their success. Now, in one of these numerous associations, where each proprietor holds only a few hundred dollars in the stock, and where the managers derive their emolument chiefly from the wages for superintendence ; it is almost impossible that the establishment should be carried on profitably, except during some period of temporary interruption in foreign competition. The state at large should interpose its guardianship for the community, in cases where the motive is not sufficiently strong, to expect a prudent watchfulness from the individual. A sudden excitement may produce a mania in the public mind for any particular pursuit,—an act of incorporation is asked for, and obtained of course,—each individual adventures only a moderate sum, and considering it a kind of lottery, feels little solicitude about the event ; but the aggregate of property involved is very important, and the loss is a serious injury to the state. The government might then exercise a kind of negative prohibition, and by requiring a larger stake from the adventurers, secure them and the public, against a rash undertaking or improvident management.

The truth of some of these remarks is very strongly supported by the cotton manufactory at

Waltham, near Boston; one of the largest and best managed in the United States. This was begun at a period when manufactures were depressed, and many of the establishments were discontinued. One in the immediate vicinity, of considerable extent, had ceased working. Under these discouraging appearances, this manufactory was set on foot by five or six gentlemen, who had a sufficient capital to meet the delays attendant upon an incipient establishment, and in both their purchases and sales, to take advantage of the market. They had a large stake in the undertaking, and every thing was done with precaution and solidity. They first secured a water power, which gave them an ample, certain supply at all seasons. They then erected large substantial buildings. Having procured the best mechanics, they began by degrees to put up their machinery, making it certain, by experiment, that they were of the best and most improved kind. Their machinery is, consequently, superior to any other in the United States, and is not surpassed by the most perfect in England. They now consume about 400,000 pounds of cotton annually, and keep nearly 200 looms, moved by water, in constant operation.* This manufactory is a very interesting one, because it proves decisively, that, with sufficient capital and proper management, the manufacture of cotton may be carried on with advantage.

* Additional buildings and machinery have been since erected, that have nearly doubled its extent.

The cotton manufactories are numerous; they are scattered over every part of these states—many of them small, with only four or five hundred spindles, and from that number up to ten or fifteen thousand; these are, in almost every instance, the property of incorporated companies; most of them were hastily erected, and their machinery is not very good. The aggregate of their produce is very considerable, though very few of them continue in full steady operation. Their capital is commonly too limited, to enable them to transact their business advantageously. They are often obliged to make forced sales of their goods, and a rise in the price of the raw material consumes all their profits, and forces them to suspend their work; of course, they cannot be expected to make any great improvement, while liable to such interruptions. Still, this branch of manufactures for the production of coarse kinds of goods, may be considered as permanently established here.

The manufactures of iron, both wrought and cast, are largely extended in this quarter. Some iron is made from the ore, but by far the largest quantity consumed, is imported from Russia, Sweden, and England. The chief articles of cast iron, are made here to the exclusion of foreign ones. Many of the coarser articles of wrought iron are also made in large quantities, such as nails, shovels, edge tools, &c. We have, by necessity, been obliged to manufacture machinery, since it was not allowed to be exported from England. We have many excellent

workmen in this line, and the most delicate and difficult machinery is made in perfection, from a stocking loom, or a card machine, up to a steam engine; of these last we have two or three manufactories; and these invaluable machines are now getting more and more into use.

The manufactures of leather are all extensively established, and many of them brought to a high degree of perfection. In the preparation of skins, we have not yet produced the finest kinds of Morocco or Russia leather, but we are daily making a progress towards doing so. In some of the manufactures of which leather is the principal material, our produce for a long period has been very considerable; others have been more recently introduced, but all of them may vie with any foreign productions. Boots, shoes, trunks, saddlery, and book-binding, furnish a large amount in our exports to the rest of the Union. Every article of any importance made from skins, except gloves, may be considered as one of our permanent manufactures. To these may be added hats, both from wool and fur, of which large quantities are made, though we still import many of the finer description from Europe.

Our woollen manufactures may yet be considered in their infancy, though their produce is very considerable. Of the coarser kind of woollens, a very considerable proportion of what is worn in the country, is home made. The quantity has been increased by the saving of labour, from the establishment of carding machines, which are every where to be

found. Several respectable manufactories, for the production of the finer kinds of cloths and cassimeres, have been got up within a few years; and some of the specimens they have shown will bear a comparison with almost any productions of the European looms. These manufactories are gradually increasing, and we may look forward to no very distant period, when they will more than supply our own wants. Their success is connected with the improvement of our breeds of sheep; this has commenced with the introduction of the Spanish breeds: but there are some other races that are greatly wanted, and which will no doubt be had, ere long, in spite of foreign prohibition.

Besides these principal branches of manufactures, there are many others in extensive operation. Among these, glass may be cited, as having been so early brought to rival the most beautiful articles of English ware. There are glass manufactories in different places; those in Boston are the principal ones; the finest and most difficult kinds of cut glass can now be procured at them. Manufactures of all kinds of cabinet work, of musical instruments, of tin-ware, &c. &c. are to be found in different places, some of these in every village. There is no considerable branch of manufactures which has not some establishment here, excepting silk. The climate is favourable to the mulberry tree, and no doubt silk will be produced hereafter. Samples indeed have been shown in different places; but they are as yet too inconsiderable to be numbered among our fabrics.

It seems, then, that there can be no doubt of the practicability of our becoming manufacturers, and the expediency is I presume growing daily more evident. With the fullest belief, however, of the utility and necessity of manufactures, I am not anxious for the growth of large manufacturing towns, and the kind of population that exists in them in Europe; though it will naturally come in the course of things, no wise or benevolent man would wish to advance it. Our manufacturing population is now blended with that of agriculture; the labourers in the former are drawn from the latter, and frequently return to it for a time. This preserves their health and energy; in this way we may go on to a great increase of manufactures, till we are able to supply as much as we consume, though we may always find it convenient to import some articles. But to have large manufacturing cities, swarming with labourers, who are mere spinning *mules* and *jennies*,—who are reduced by competition to the minimum of subsistence, and even this rendered precarious by the change of fashion or foreign prohibition;—such a state of things I do not wish to see existing, while there is any land left to give our population the means of subsistence. Indeed, there is no fear that it will happen for many generations to come.

Let me point out to your notice, one or two of the advantages we possess, for the establishment of manufactures. Those abroad who fear our competition, have commonly solaced themselves with the

belief, that we never could carry on manufactures extensively, because labour was too high ; the same idea has been held up here, by those who have considered the question superficially, or with adverse prejudices. Now, it is remarkable, that in all those numerous branches of manufactures, in which foreign productions have been altogether superseded, except in a few cases of luxury or fashionable caprice—it is labour, and labour of the dearest kind, that is almost exclusively employed. For instance, boots, shoes, hats, saddlery, &c. &c. ;—in these and many other articles, machinery cannot be used, and the work is almost wholly performed by men.—It is not the price of labour, but the want of capital, that prevents our success. We manufacture for ourselves much the greater part of what we consume, excepting those fabrics which are principally made by machinery. The labour of men is dearer than it is in England, but the labour of women and children bears nearly the same price in both countries ; and in the great manufactories of cotton, and many others, the number of men who are employed is comparatively small. Whenever persons of capital shall choose to employ it in manufactures, and give their personal attention to their concerns, it will be found that the price of labour will be no impediment.

There is also a preference given by our people to employment in a manufactory, over domestic service, which grows out of their character and habits. This is not the case in Europe ;—it gives a consi-

derable facility to the establishments of manufactures, and will continue so long as they are well managed. The labour is not so perpetual, as to prevent children from receiving instruction; and being conducted with order and decency, the daughters of respectable farmers often pass three or four years in them, where they accumulate a little sum from their wages, and avoid, what they consider a degradation, becoming household servants. A well regulated manufactory, situated in the country, may be made subservient to the promotion of good principles and good habits in those employed in it; while in large towns, and with a straining competition incessantly exerted, the labour is too continuous to admit of any instruction or any relaxation. Health and morals are both disregarded, and too frequently destroyed altogether.

The want of coal will prevent our making use of steam engines of large dimensions, until it shall be discovered, which it probably will be at no remote period, between the Connecticut and the Hudson, if not in other parts of this district. In the mean time we have innumerable mill-seats, whose water power is perpetual. They are of course generally scattered, and will not admit of many establishments in one spot; but there are exceptions in some falls of water, which furnish an almost unlimited power. These waterfalls are one of the remarkable features of the Atlantic states generally, but particularly so of the eastern division. They furnish an invaluable facility to manufactures, which

is some compensation for the evil they cause in the interruption of navigation. Some of the most considerable of these mill-seats are directly upon the tide water, so that they have all the advantages of being contiguous to navigation.

A great facility of communication, from good roads or navigable rivers, is an important benefit to our manufactures. They are no where at any great distance from a market, either for local consumption or for exportation. The extensive and hourly increasing market that is afforded within the limits of the United States, where no duty or restriction can be laid upon them, is an advantage, a very powerful one, which they partake in common with the rest of the Union. The raw material of the most important production is obtained, within the United States ;—the materials of others, wool, iron, flax, &c. are produced in considerable quantities, and may hereafter be made adequate to a full supply.

The present produce of our manufactures, is of the most useful kind, and the best calculated for securing them a preference with the consumer. They are principally the coarse kinds of goods, and are much more substantial than European or India merchandise of the same prices. They have, therefore, obtained a character in this respect, which makes them always in demand. The public gain too, in a general way, since these domestic productions are so much more durable. This substantial quality they can, in most articles, always maintain ;—in cotton stuffs, for instance, since the raw material comes

to them so much cheaper, that in those cloths where the quantity of material employed forms a great part of the price, the foreign manufacturer, who is obliged to purchase it at a much higher rate, must make his fabrics slighter, and thus very inferior in quality ;—trying to obtain a sale by a superior finish and appearance. Our fabrics commence with acquiring a reputation for durability ; they will gradually add that of variety and elegance.

There are no people more ingenious in the use and invention of machinery, no country more prolific in patents, than the one under consideration. Good mechanics are to found in every one of the mechanic arts, and the improvements they have made in some old, and the invention of many new instruments, are strong proofs of their skill and enterprise. These are not shown merely in the common tools in use in various trades, but in the most complicated and useful machines. Such, for instance, are the card and nail machines, which are so extensively used in the United States. These are entirely of their own invention. They have also improved the machines used in Europe, in the process of spinning and weaving ;—though the machinery was considered almost perfect there, they have made many ameliorations. In this department, also, we have an advantage over the European manufacturer ;—no resistance is made here to the introduction of any machinery ; every kind of labour-saving machine is eagerly sought after, and new ones are constantly coming into use. In Europe, the manu-

facturer is often limited in this respect ; he is often afraid to make use of machinery that would be of essential service to him. Machinery that is used in one county, sometimes cannot be brought into another, without producing a riot among the workmen. Within a few years the most serious mischief, alarming and long continued disturbances, have arisen from this source. Our manufacturers have no fears of this kind to encounter.

With these advantages, to which may be added a healthy climate, a numerous, active, free population, we are certainly capable of becoming an important manufacturing district. Nothing is wanting but capital, largely engaged, and personally attended to, for the immediate extension of manufactures. I have no doubt that this will all happen in due time : no one can wish to see it forced prematurely, who is governed by sound and enlightened views. Individual enterprise is less thwarted in this country than in any other, by the interference of government, either in the shape of prohibition or bounties. An intelligent, industrious people are left to pursue what they find most advantageous ; and the aggregate of individual, forms the noble mass of national prosperity, that we enjoy.

LETTER XI.

REMARKS ON CERTAIN POINTS OF ADMINISTRATION
IN DIFFERENT STATES.

YOU know, my dear Sir, that in regard to a late Envoy from a foreign court, it was cited, as a convincing proof of the amiable, not to say skilful, policy of this gentleman and his wife, soon after their arrival, that they were resolved to be popular ; —they were pleased with every thing, “*even the road from Baltimore to Washington.*” I am happy to acknowledge that a “bad eminence” is taken from the road in question ; but I believe it still remains with some others in its vicinity. Now, it was, you know, after a winter’s excursion over these perilous roads, which are most powerfully described in Milton’s narration of Satan’s passage through chaos, and which makes a journey over them more dangerous and painful, than a voyage across the Atlantic ; that “all smarting with my wounds,” I discovered some petulance at the injustice with which we in the east were treated ; and the total disregard or oblivion of the peculiar burdens, to which we subjected ourselves for the common advantage. I promised you, when my irritation had subsided and my bruises were gone, that I would make some

remarks on our relative contribution to the public good ; without intending to make invidious comparisons, or to vaunt our own merits, which, are owing to those wise views that were designated by our ancestors in their earliest regulations.

This subject involves a consideration of the process for the management of public affairs, in the Eastern states, and will show how this differs from the mode of administration, in other parts of the Union. I have no intention of going into the whole of this ; it would require an epistle of tedious minuteness. The plans of the different commonwealths in our national system, are governed by the same general laws, and gravitate to the same centre ; and though there is almost as much difference in the size of these bodies, as there is in the planets of our system, yet they all revolve in symmetry and harmony. There is some difference in their mode of action, though there is a great similarity in the result.

The states of New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and some others, have raised large funds and carried on extensive schemes of internal improvement ; which prove their administrations to be directed by a far-sighted, enlightened policy, the advantages of which will be more and more developed. There is an air of grandeur in these extensive plans of utility, that does honour to the states that adopt them ; and many great objects of general advantage are thus attained, that would never be undertaken by individuals. It must be borne in

mind, however, that almost all improvements in these states are made from the state funds, or by chartered companies, who receive a toll in remuneration: and though great objects are effected by clearing rivers of obstructions, by making roads and canals, yet these do not come in every man's way, and the traveller is much oftener impeded there, than in this section, where he finds good roads in every direction.

Some explanation of this sort is necessary, to prevent the eastern states from being considered inferior in public spirit, or liberal policy, to their neighbours. It will be found, on examination, that the taxes annually raised in these states, for three objects, education, roads, and militia—in which the whole nation have an indirect concern, that each state should do its duty—are more in proportion, than are paid in any other state in the Union. It is precisely on these subjects that we may claim the praise for our citizens at large, of being directed by enlightened, public-spirited feelings. The manner in which this is done precludes any ostentatious reports, but the real purposes of such expenses are very well answered. The militia is an organized system, of which some display is made, because it is connected with the government, as the governor is commander in chief—but the affairs of schools and roads are not managed by the state administration. They depend on each separate town, which levies and appropriates, at its own discretion, the sums raised within itself. There is one exception

only to this ; in Connecticut there is a school fund, from which each town receives a certain income annually to pay for its schools ; by which means the inhabitants are exempt from all expense on this account, though every child in the state has the opportunity of common school education.

The laws require that every town should support schools, and also keep in good repair the roads within its limits ; and for failure in either of these duties, the legal remedies are of course provided. These roads are constantly improving, and, except in very new districts, may be generally considered very good. Besides these public roads, there are turnpikes in every direction ; over these the United States carry their mail, and transport military stores, and thus derive a direct advantage from them ; and a citizen of another state derives the same facility as the inhabitants. The people of Maryland are as able to pay for the expense of good roads as the people of Connecticut ; yet in the former state they are almost impassable, and in the latter are every where in good condition. One state has then a right to claim some merit, for the service it renders to the public in this way, and which is grossly neglected by another.

I have no data to form an accurate estimate of the sums annually raised for this purpose. There is no provision for making any official returns, and I have never seen any statistical account of them ; though, they are so important in the political economy of the state, that an annual statement of

them ought to be made to the legislature. Every town agrees, by an annual vote, to lay out a sum upon the highways; this is afterwards assessed upon the inhabitants, and expended under the direction of surveyors, chosen for the purpose. A good deal depends on the judgment and fidelity of these surveyors, in seeing that the work is not slighted. The tax is expected to be paid by labour, and is almost always discharged in this way;—but if inconvenient to the individual, he may pay it in money. I believe I am within bounds in estimating the highway taxes, annually raised in the eastern states, at 200,000 dollars.* Besides this annual expenditure, more than two millions of dollars have been employed, within a few years, by incorporated companies, in constructing bridges and roads. The former are generally a lucrative stock; but of the latter, there are very few that pay simple interest for the capital. These roads, however, were, in many instances, subscribed to by the greater part of the stockholders, rather with a view to public improvement, than from any sanguine expectations of income from the stock. Another million of dollars may be placed to the item of canals, which, though in almost all cases an improving property, give at present but a small per centage on the stock.

In the department of education there is also an annual tax, voted by each town, for their public schools. This is apportioned, if the township is

* I have been told by some persons that in their opinion this item might be trebled at least.

extensive, according to the number of children in each school district, so that it often happens that a section richer in children than in property, draws a greater amount from the treasury than they pay in taxes; the rich thus contribute for the education of the poor. It sometimes happens, where the population is scattered, that some of the children have to go one or two miles to school; and traversing this distance through the snow, in some of our winter mornings, makes them hardy, at least, if they do not become learned. All the children go to school at least a part of the year. The value of common education is extensively felt, and great exertions are made to obtain it. In passing through a woody district, not long since, where there were very few inhabitants; the stage driver, in pointing to two solitary, mean looking dwellings, told me, that in the winter before, the two families which inhabited them, being four or five miles from any school, had hired a schoolmaster to reside with them two months; and that they furnished him seventeen scholars between them, and of different colours too, for one of these families was black. I should say, (or to make, in this case, a legitimate use of a favourite term, I should *guess*,) that the sum expended for this purpose, raised by voluntary, annual taxation, amounted to 300,000 dollars.*

* In this item, as in that of roads, I have been told since the first edition of this work, that a very large addition might be made to it. But having no means of ascertaining the amount accurately, I do not alter it; as my principal purpose was to shew the principle, not the precise sum expended, which in all these estimates I have greatly underrated.

Besides this, there is an expenditure in a great number of private schools, academies, colleges, &c. which would more than double the amount.

In the department of the militia, all the service is performed that is required by law ; and I presume there is no state in the Union, which can compare with any one of the eastern states, in their fulfilment of militia duties. On this point I will take the state of Massachusetts for some particulars, which will enable you to form an opinion ; and I believe that the other states in this political division are nearly, or quite as effective. The militia in this state exceeds 80,000 men ;—these are regularly organized in companies, battalions, brigades, and divisions. The staff is all complete. The state gives no pay, except to a quartermaster, and adjutant-generals and their clerks, who, having permanent duties to perform, have regular salaries and a small allowance to certain staff officers for the transmission of orders, &c. It also pays for the expenses of courts martial, for powder to the artillery, and furnishes instruments of military music, and all the *materiel* of the artillery, except side-arms. There are ninety pieces of brass field artillery, in the charge of the different companies. The whole body is trained at least four days in the year ; three times by companies, and once by regiments, or brigades. The officers, of all ranks, are in complete uniform,—so also are the artillery, cavalry, riflemen, and most of the light infantry companies. The whole are completely armed, and every man between eighteen and forty,

except magistrates, clergymen, physicians, and members of the legislature, is held to perform this service.—and all fines, for any failure, are rigidly exacted. The expenses of this branch, including the service of the privates, uniform of officers, and volunteer companies, and the sums paid out of the state treasury, I think cannot be estimated at less than half a million of dollars annually ; and supposing the others to pay only as much more, the militia costs the eastern states one million of dollars yearly.*

Thus, from these three sources, it will be seen that a very constant and considerable contribution is made to the public weal ; and for performing our duty effectually, in this way, as we not only act for ourselves, but contribute to the national strength and character, we ask for some consideration from other states, and especially from those who, by neglecting these duties, exonerate themselves from their burdens. I think they are unwise in doing so, and that they are, eventually, the sufferers. No man would wish to diminish these contributions, or to enlarge them much ; the latter could not be done without making them oppressive. As it is, it may be stated in the way of generalizing, that, for the support of the militia, highways, and common school education, every able-bodied man contributes ten days of annual labour ;—this proves a degree of public spirit that is highly honourable to the citizens.

* If the utility of the militia, in war time, against a foreign foe, were only considered, this expense might be thought excessive ; but the real object of a militia is domestic ; it is to prevent the small regular army, which we cannot do without, from becoming too large, and destructive to our freedom.

It will be observed, that the greater part of these contributions are voluntarily imposed from year to year ; and that the power of laying these taxes, is not delegated to the state, but is reserved to each town, which raises the money, and appropriates it at its own discretion. This is doubtless effected in a way more convenient to the inhabitants, than if it were a subject of general administration. Indeed, it is highly characteristic of the deep-laid republican feeling, which is the foundation of all our institutions. Every thing is delegated,—but nothing is delegated further, or longer, than is absolutely necessary. The government is intrusted with no jurisdiction, and no finances, except for such general purposes as cannot well be avoided. This keeps up a general attention to public concerns,—a habit, in a limited way, of providing for the public service ; and, consequently, a considerable degree of public feeling and watchfulness. The general convenience is, no doubt, better served, though it narrows the operations of administration. The people are in the habit of taxing themselves for the public good, and they do it more willingly, when they have the immediate control and distribution of the money, which they probably dispose of more advantageously and economically, than it would be expended if placed in distant hands.

Still, it must not be concealed, that this system has some disadvantages, and that the views of administration in the eastern states are, in comparison with some others, as diminutive, as their system of finance. The state of New-York has undertaken

a canal, which would have been considered a magnificent enterprise, by the proudest monarchy in Europe. Pennsylvania has laid out great sums in roads and canals. Virginia is proceeding in a systematic course of public improvement, worthy of an enlightened and powerful state. Others are following these examples, and will reap the benefit of them. In those states, large funds have been wisely accumulated for the general purposes of public improvement ; and where this was wanting, bold and sagacious statesmen have laid taxes to effect the purpose, and made even taxation popular, when it was for such objects. In this section, the citizens have done their duty within their own limits ; but no wide scope of policy has ever been shown by the governments. Not one of these states, in a career of unexampled prosperity for a whole generation, has done any thing to accumulate funds for public improvement, with the exception of the state of Connecticut. The exception is, indeed, a noble one ;—she has accumulated a fund that now pays for all the schools in the state. Massachusetts had great means in her power, but they have been chiefly frittered away, though enough still remains to do something, which shall be of permanent advantage to the commonwealth. The other states had no lands that were public property ;—but a small per centage on the taxation, annually set apart, would have accumulated a fund for the next generation, with no inconvenience to the present.

But there is nothing in the character of our state administrations, that can lead to the adoption of such

a policy. The governors are commonly selected at a period of life, when they are not expected to originate any thing new. The salaries attached to state offices, are not sufficient to command the services of very active talents; and the influential members of the legislature too often derive their influence from being the opponents of any more extensive systems. Men who advocate wider views, are looked upon with wonder or suspicion, and are sure to become unpopular;—they, therefore, must either sacrifice these views, or, by pursuing them, lose the station that would be necessary to carry them into execution. Cunning men, in the mean time, prosper;—they serve the purposes of a subaltern ambition, by an eternal “*booing*” to narrow minds, and narrow prejudices;—every thing continues the same, in “this best of all possible worlds;” they keep the management of affairs within their own comprehension, and nothing is impaired, but the honour and prosperity of the state.

It is not necessary to raise very large sums, or to endeavour to fill the treasury for indefinite purposes. There should be no funds accumulated, except for appropriation to some specific object. It would be dangerous to leave funds to any amount, without having them so pledged. The violence of party would be nourished by the hope of managing such funds, and would be apt rashly to appropriate them in a way to serve its purposes. We have seen instances, where funds lying in the treasury, have been absurdly squandered by party violence; when, at the same time, it would never have dared to raise

the same sums by taxation, as that would have thrown it out of power. But funds may be raised for education, for the construction of roads, bridges, and canals, and other specific purposes,—and the most positive enactments should guard against their being applied to any other objects.

There are, doubtless, many advantages arising from our thorough republican habit, of leaving the care of many interior concerns and local expenditures to be provided for, by the citizens in their local districts. But, at the same time, there are many objects that can be effected only by the state governments, and the operation of an enlarged policy. Such are the protection of the higher branches of education in our Universities; the encouragement of agriculture and the arts,—and the construction of public edifices, roads, and canals. There are some objects of this description that demand, imperiously, the patronage of the state, and which would be productive of extensive public advantage. The expense and the uncertainty of adequate returns, make it impossible for private associations, founded on a view of profit, to undertake them. It is such objects which call loudly for a change of our policy, so far as to prepare for their future accomplishment, by funds, under the control of the state. A revisal of our financial system would procure these means, without any perceptible burden on the community; and by furnishing to these states the future power of performing great public works, add to the dignity of their governments, and promote the prosperity of their citizens.

LETTER XII.

ON THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE STATE OF THE
INDIANS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE little Indian story you mentioned to me, has turned my attention to the subject of the original Americans, to whom the events of the day have given a momentary accession of interest. There are few things connected with our history, that have occasioned more declamation, or more opposite statements. After a long and intimate knowledge of them, some have described the Indians as possessed of every virtue; while others degrade them below the rank of humanity, as destitute of every good quality, and practising all the vices, that can come under the heads of dishonesty, perfidy, and ferocity. One swears that the object before him is black; the other maintains that it is white; while the bystander, who knows that the two sides of the shield are of different colours, will perceive that both are right, from the position in which they have viewed it. In the mean time, the unfortunate race which is the subject of dispute, is mouldering away, and at no remote period will have no existence but in history.

There is something very saddening in the reflection, that the original possessors of this magnificent country, whom we acknowledged for the lords of the soil, when we bought their birthright for a mess of pottage, should be inevitably destined to destruction. It seems cruel, that we should not give them the benefits of civilization, and share with them, at least, the land that was once exclusively their own. Theoretical philanthropists have cried out against us, and practical ones have vainly endeavoured to avert the fate which seems marked out for the Indians. Nation after nation disappears, and, in a few years, the last remnants of these numerous tribes will be driven, with the buffalo and the deer, to the recesses of the Rocky Mountains. Once in a while a master spirit among them attempts, with vain struggles, to resist the destruction that is impending. In the truest spirit of patriotism he rouses his countrymen, but only leads them to their ruin; after scalping a few men, murdering a few women, and dashing out the brains of their children. Though he may be a good warrior, he proves but a false prophet in his predictions of success: he is either cut down, like the prophet Tecumseh, or hung, like the prophet Francis, and the ruin of his tribe is consummated.

It is remarkable, how few of the natives are to be found in our population, and how rarely they blend with it. The discolourings from Indian, are infinitely fewer than those arising from Negro mixture. The few that remain are not so numerous as the Gipsies in many parts of Europe, to whom they may

in many points be compared. Two or three, or sometimes a larger groupe, perambulate the country, offering medicinal herbs, baskets or brooms for sale, almost the only articles they manufacture. They are a harmless set of beings, and lead a life of hardship, though not of labour. I have sometimes thought, when I have seen some of these poor Indians, on the revolving turns of fate; that here were the descendants perhaps of the Sachems, who once held the country, and made treaties with our ancestors when they might have annihilated them, gaining a scanty livelihood from the charitable purchases of their posterity. They preserve most of the traits of the Indian character, though imbedded in civilization, and knowing no other language than the English. They are seldom seen to laugh, are prone to intoxication, yet obliged, from poverty, to have intervals of sobriety; and in traversing the country, while they commonly make use of our roads, they retain a knowledge of its natural topography; and are never afraid of being lost in a forest, as they always know their direction, and often traverse the country, as was the primitive practice, from one stream to another, at the shortest carrying place; and still are acquainted with all the rivers and ponds, and the most probable places for finding game.

If then, so many tribes and nations have disappeared, leaving no other than these miserable vestiges, so that they and their language have become extinct; if within the wide limits of the old United States, there hardly exist Indians enough to form

one populous village, could this destruction have been prevented by the whites?—Has civilized man made use of his superiority over the savage, only to despoil him? Is the existence of a barbarous and civilized nation, in the same country compatible? Is the red man of the American forests a species of the human genus susceptible of civilization? It may be of some assistance, in answering these questions, to consider what has been done towards civilizing the Indians;—I cannot go into the inquiry at large, but will only give you a sketch of what has been attempted in the state of Massachusetts,—this is not much, yet is probably more than has been done by any other.

The first founders, either through fear, or some better motive, appeared to wish to deal peaceably and honestly with the natives. Though they came here with the European prejudices, and were in the habit of hearing the Pope and other sovereigns, claim the property of the country, without any consideration for the natives who were in possession, yet they bought the land they occupied, and generally maintained their treaties with them. They would have followed a liberal course of policy, if it had not been for their peculiar religious fanaticism. Our forefathers were constantly likening themselves to the Israelites, one of the most cruel of nations, as shown in their own annals: like them, they were invading a country that did not belong to them, whose inhabitants they considered heathen, and therefore deserving of destruction.

The hardships of their situation made them harsh in their sentiments, and the sternest denunciations of the Old Testament were the passages most frequently in their mouths. The Indians were heated, and on this account a feeling of scorn was engendered, that prevented any general sympathy for their condition. Humanity, however, was still felt in many upright, benevolent minds; and religion too guided some individuals to pursue the beneficent lessons of the New, rather than the exterminating injunctions of the Old Testament, in their treatment of the natives. Some good men were constantly endeavouring to ameliorate their condition; among whom the venerable Eliot is most conspicuous. His zeal, learning, and industry enabled him to form a grammar of their languages, and to translate the Bible into it. He has been sometimes called the Indian Apostle; and his primitive simplicity, devotedness, and entire disinterestedness, gave him claims to the appellation.

If, however, there was any chance from the exertions of such missionaries as Eliot, or such benevolent characters in civil life as Roger Williams, and some others, it was destroyed by the wars that were afterwards excited. The premature destruction of the Indians was chiefly brought about by the rivalries of foreign nations; who made use of them, in the most profligate and remorseless manner, to promote their own ambitious designs. The rivalries of the French and English occasioned the destruction of whole tribes, in the early ages of the colo-

nies ; as the same policy pursued by the latter of those nations, in their former and recent war with us, again produced the same effect. The most sanguinary wars in which the Eastern Indians were engaged with the whites, were excited by the French in Canada. The forests which are impervious to the advance of a regular army, are the appropriate scene of operation for Indian warriors,—and a communication between remote points is readily maintained by them. The Six Nations were the dogs of war, whom the English let slip upon the French at every opportunity ; while the latter more than once stirred up all the tribes between the Penobscot and the Hudson, to carry on the most harrassing hostilities against our settlements. The practices of Indian warfare are such, as to rouse all the feelings of hatred and vengeance, and the strongest detestation against their authors. All considerations of justice or magnanimity are lost sight of by those, who have seen their women and children massacred ; and though the war may not have been unprovoked, the manner in which it is carried on, stifles all the feelings of humanity, and the savages, if injured in the first instance, are from the mode they take of revenging it, doomed without remorse to extermination.

The mode of civilization pursued formerly, was not so well understood as it has been since : the process was very imperfect. They began with the wrong end, and insisted on making that a precedent,

which would have happened more easily as a consequence. It has been found much more successful, to give the Indians a love of fixed residences and domestic comforts ; to induce them to exchange hunting for cultivation, and with a change of habits, to give them the religious instruction, that will harmonize with it. But our forefathers were staunch dogmatists ; they thought abstruse points of faith the only sources of all salutary influence, and taught their Indian neophytes the Assembly's catechism, before they showed them how to spin. Societies were early formed in Europe and this country, for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians and others ; and if it had not been for this little additional clause, the society must in time have been without an object. Few societies that have existed so long, have done less ; they have employed some missionaries, who have struggled with more or less ability, to keep alive a dwindling congregation. This was not from any defect of good intentions, but from the impracticability of the object, or want of energy, or some defects in their system. The Jesuits and the Moravians have been the most prosperous in their missionary labours ; and they seem to be the only ones, that have any hope of forming permanent congregations of a red colour.

The state of Massachusetts has now four tribes within its limits, and under its protection. One of these dwells on the Penobscot, where they own a considerable tract of country. The state has by law secured to itself the right of pre-emption, as

the United States have done with all the Indian tribes, to prevent their being defrauded by individuals. From time to time purchases are made, as the Indians waste away, and then an act is made relative to "the extinguishing the Indian title" in certain tracts,—which, in other words, might be said to be, for extinguishing the Indians. The Penobscot tribe consists of about 400 souls; they retain their own language, and speak also a broken English. They dress with our kinds of garments, modified by Indian taste, retaining their fondness for ornaments; but as these are no longer of their own manufacture, from feathers and shells, which would retain something peculiar, but are formed from the most sorry materials we can furnish them, fragments of ribands and bits of tin, they have a miserable appearance. They are Roman Catholics after a manner, in which faith they were anciently instructed by the Canadian Jesuits;—they are in the tadpole state; the limbs of civilization partly formed, and the tail of savage life not yet obliterated. Some of their chiefs are intelligent, and there are a few individuals among them, who have reminiscences of a prouder condition. They are, I believe, like all the others, gradually growing worse and dwindling.

The three other tribes are on a different footing. Two of them are situated in the county of Plymouth, in the district which we call the "Old Colony,"—and the third at Gay Head and Martha's Vineyard. The former are known by the name of

the Massapee, and Herring-pond tribes, and the latter takes its name from the place of residence. This country, generally poor in point of soil, was once thickly peopled with Indians. It was the location, of all others, best suited to them, abounding with small lakes, and clear brooks, all replete with trout and many other kinds of fish ;—and in the spring filled with astonishing quantities of herrings. In the districts, the forests contain deer and several kinds of game ; besides a sea-coast possessing inexhaustible stores of shell-fish, and the sea itself affording a certain supply of various kinds of the finest fish. The light sandy soil was perfectly adapted to their imperfect cultivation, and gave them a supply of corn and squashes,—so that, with perennial stores of fish and game, even Indian improvidence was never left in want of subsistence. Here let me remark to you, by the way, on the singular fact ; that the oldest district in the country should be almost the only one, where the original tenants of the forest, biped and quadruped,—the Indian and the deer,—are still to be found ; but how different is their condition !—the latter bounds with as much grace and elasticity, as did its precursors when our forefathers first landed,—how degraded are the descendants of Philip and Massasoit !

These tribes are in a state of perpetual pupillage. They cannot alienate their lands, or any part of their natural productions, of which firewood is the most important. Each individual has a right to

cultivate what piece of land he pleases, and this, as well as the hut he occupies, are his, from a kind of right of occupancy, which is not clearly defined. They have guardians appointed by the state, against whom the Indians occasionally make complaints to the legislature—it may be presumed often unreasonably—and also missionaries sent them by the society for propagating the gospel. These tribes are a kind of perquisite to the state and this society, who divide the care of them, and if you wish to observe a specimen of the most degraded and miserable population in the whole country, you must visit the *protegees* of these two bodies. It is now nearly two centuries since the experiment has been going on, and it furnishes a standing lesson of the luckless consequences of vesting in states, or societies, the guardianship of tribes of people. Far be it from me to accuse either of these bodies of misconduct or neglect; but either they have been guilty of both, or the civilization, and improvement of Indians are hopeless attempts. The charge of these tribes seems entailed upon the state, and serious objections arise to their divesting themselves of it. Unless, therefore, a species of benevolent exertion and watchful attention should arise, we shall continue to furnish to posterity a perpetual example of the poor results, that attend upon plans for Indian civilization.*

* A very interesting account of these Indians, may be found in the third volume, second series, of the Massachusetts Historical Society's papers.

There are no individuals now remaining in these tribes of pure Indian blood. They are all of a mixed breed, some crossed with the white, and some with the African races. The greater part of the men are employed as sailors, particularly by the people of Nantucket and New Bedford, in their whaling ships. Some of the females go into the neighbouring towns, as servants, returning home occasionally. Though they have lost the language and the virtues of their ancestors, and are only a mongrel mixture, they still retain some of their superstitions and customs. One of these the traveller will have occasion to notice. On the road between Plymouth and Sandwich, there are certain rocks by the way-side, where the road passes through an extensive piece of forest, that are always seen covered with chips and dry sticks. These are called the *sacrifice rocks*, and every person of these tribes, as he passes them, always lays a dry stick or piece of wood upon them. The origin of this practice is unknown. In one of these tribes, the most respectable individual is of half negro and half Indian blood ;—and in another, a negro born in Africa, said to have been the son of a chieftain, and sold, when a boy, for a slave ;—he is now advanced in life, as well as the other, and appeared to me, in a short conversation, a solid, sensible man. An important and favourite article of food with all these people, are the various kinds of shell-fish, of which they are always certain of obtaining a supply. Living in a slothful, filthy manner, their miserable

cabins are mostly situated on the shores of two beautiful lakes, in the midst of very picturesque scenery, and in a country, which from the abundance of different kinds of game, forms the delight of the sportsman.

Besides these splendid efforts in patronizing whole tribes, attempts have been occasionally made from the first settlement of the country, to give individuals an education. The catalogues of Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth colleges, show a few Indian graduates. Now and then an individual has been qualified for being a missionary,—but notwithstanding all these attempts; I do not at this moment recollect, that one civilized Indian has ever discovered any kind of superiority; not a single family of them has been kept up in a tame state. There has never been even a scion ingrafted on the wild stock, that has produced fruit of any value. The only example that I know of is in Virginia, where it is said some of the descendants of Pocahontas are proud of their descent from that interesting princess. There are no families in this quarter, that have any Indian blood, avowedly, who have ever attained to any distinction; though there are two or three who, from peculiarities of lineament or complexion, have given rise to vague, and probably malicious conjectures. I do not wish the inference to be strong against the unfortunate aborigines. If our ancestors had mixed with them on terms of equality, some individual families might have permanently veined the white mass of popu-

lation. There are one or two characters preserved in our histories, that interest us in a degree, like Pocahontas. But the prejudice against the Indians, even when they were our equals in some things, and our superiors in power, prevented all intermarriages. They were treated with contempt, and of course with injustice.

It would be too strong an inference to say, that the Indians do not possess talents capable of being developed by cultivation ; but it is certainly remarkable, that, in the course of two centuries, and with many opportunities furnished them, not one should have become distinguished. In their wild state they have shown themselves to be eminent as warriors, politicians, and orators. Massasoit and Philip, among our Indians, Garangula, Decanesora, Corn-planter, and Tecumseh, among the Six Nations, Tamanend, Logan, and many others, among the Lennape, have left a reputation that will preserve their names in Indian history. The wars, the confederacies and policy, of different Indian nations, show marks of talent and deep views, among their leaders. This we can ascertain even from the imperfect knowledge we have of them, derived through the medium of common interpreters ; and it should be remembered, that these people have no written records, and therefore do not speak for themselves ; that though they possessed powerful minds among them, yet every generation had to do all its labour for itself. As there were no books, no science and learning could be stored

up for progressive improvement; and, save the feeble aids of confused tradition, each succession of men had to acquire every thing for themselves; as if they were the first race of mankind, just sprung from "the earth, the common mother." The history of these people, long after they shall have become extinct, will be interesting to our posterity, and furnish subjects for poetry and romance. They will be to us, what the inhabitants of the earth were in the fabulous ages of Greece; a race of people gathered into tribes, before Ceres or Bacchus, Cadmus or Hercules, had visited the world to exterminate monsters, and teach the means of cultivation and intellectual improvement. Too many facts will be preserved, and the contemporary records will be too clear to permit the same extravagance of allegory and fable; but a remote posterity will look back with wonder to this strange race of men, whose country their ancestors usurped, and of whom there will be no other vestiges, than what we now have of the mammoth.

Is there any thing in this species of men that makes them wither, when transplanted from the shades of the forest to the open grounds of cultivation? Are their characters suited only to a wild state, and incapable of artificial amelioration? If reclaimed from savage life, could they distinguish themselves among the tame herds of policed states? Would their warriors be capable of being more than corporals or serjeants, in our scientific discipline? Would one of their prophets rise higher

than one of our fanatics in theology? Would their orators dwindle into mere spouting demagogues? I should not have much hesitation in answering these questions, if I thought we had fallen upon the average of Indian abilities, in those we have attempted to educate. But it is generally the poorest and most inferior part of a tribe, that becomes the subject of civilization. The most energetic spurn our habits, and if their own tribe is so humbled as to adopt them, fly off to some, that still adhere to the hunting state. There is a charm in savage life, that sometimes leads away the descendants of people, who have been civilized from time immemorial. How much more, then, may we expect apostacy in those who have been newly converted from it? We have seen repeated instances of Indians, who were taken when boys, brought up among us, and enjoying the comforts of civilized life, renounce it after a series of years, and return once more to the forests. The most perfect convert is constantly in danger of a relapse; a sudden caprice may restore him at once to his first habits, like that metamorphosed lady, who resumed instantly her claws and her whiskers, at the sight of a mouse.

The only chance of saving any of this race, will be, by taking their children, at a very early age, and educating them in our habits, in a situation removed from the contagion of Indian pursuits. A very effectual way, too, would be the proposal that was made in an official report, to recommend mar-

riages between them and the whites. This suggestion was treated with obloquy and ridicule by shallow minds, which had not meditated, or were incapable of estimating the subject. But unless we offer them the rights of citizens, on certain conditions, we shall never, even in this way, obtain any but the meaner kinds. Savage as he is, the Indian can still see and feel all the relative positions of society; and unless we surmount our prejudices against complexion, and allow the red man the same advantages as the white, what inducement can we offer them to adopt our customs? How can it be expected that a proud, intelligent chief, should renounce war and hunting, become a Christian and a cultivator, if he is to be treated with contempt, and deprived of all privileges, on account of the colour of his skin? The experiment of civilizing them cannot be said to be fairly made, until you shall have imparted to them all your rights, when they have adopted all your habits.*

I would not assert that our governments have been always just towards the Indians; but they

* A striking display of Indian character occurred some years since in a town in Maine. An Indian of the Kennebeck tribe remarkable for his good conduct, received a grant of land from the state, and fixed himself in a new township where a number of families were settled. Though not ill treated, yet the common prejudice against Indians prevented any sympathy with him. This was shewn at the death of his only child, when none of the people came near him. Shortly afterwards he went to some of the inhabitants and said to them, *When white man's child die—Indian man he sorry—he help bury him—when my child die—no one speak to me—I make his grave alone—I can no live here.* He gave up his farm, dug up the body of his child, and carried it with him two hundred miles through the forests, to join the Canada Indians. What energy and depth of feeling does this specimen of Indian character exhibit!

have been more so than those of any other nation. In time of war, extermination has sometimes been the watchword, but it was when the passions were roused by scenes of Indian cruelty; even then, the vengeance has arisen from the stimulated fury of individual commanders, rather than from the orders of the government. The Indians are the victims, —but the blame should fall on those, who engage them to practise such shocking barbarities in their cause, and then leave them to their fate. The policy of the federal government has been, from the beginning, influenced by humane views towards the natives;—it may not have done all in its power, but it has made numerous treaties with them, with fair stipulations, which have been observed with good faith. It has made some attempts at introducing the arts of civilization among them; and has endeavoured to mediate and prevent wars between hostile tribes. More, perhaps, might have been done,—but are those benevolent minds, which deplore the sufferings and degradation of Indians, prepared to prove that they might have been prevented? or would they support the measures and expenses, necessary to the experiment of civilizing them?

The flood of civilization is constantly flowing, till at no distant period, it must cover the whole of our part of the continent. It is hardly worth discussing the question, whether the government ought to confine its progress, when it is obviously out of their power. Even the *gens d'armes* and

douaniers of Napoleon would have been insufficient for this purpose;—and how is it possible for our government to control the scouts, the precursors of civilization? a set of restless, daring, and commonly profligate beings, whose character, like their position, is intermediate, between savage and civilized life, and is more prone to possess the vices of both, than the virtues of either. These people are as incapable of the restraints of civilized society, as the savage himself; they move on before it, and as it overtakes them, still advance,—perhaps cultivating a little, but easily shifting their residence,—and fonder of the gun than the plough. These are the people with whom the Indian comes most in contact, and from whom he often receives injuries that are revenged upon the innocent. This has been the course of things from the beginning; and it appears to me quite impossible for the government to alter it, even if they employed a large army, and the greatest expenditure. The Indians must recede, and perish gradually, not through the agency of the whites, but through the vices and diseases they acquire from them. All that is practicable, seems to be, the civilization of those insulated bodies of Indians, which the rapid and accidental flow of civilization has left among us. What would be the most effectual process, or the ultimate results from even these limited attempts, cannot be very clearly defined.

A strong reason against commencing the attempts at civilization, exclusively with religious instruc-

tion, is the opposition that will be opposed by Indian superstition. The Indians, particularly the highest and least vitiated among them, are attached to their own notions, some of which are the soundest principles of natural religion. They are very apt to confound our religion with the evils our society has brought upon them; and their prophets take every occasion to excite their distrust of our missionaries;—they represent it as the fatal engine that encloses the means of their destruction: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, would answer for the motto of their warnings to the tribe. Sometimes they reject our offers with violence,—but more commonly with a sarcastic and deep irony, that is veiled under an appearance of candour and thankfulness. There is a very good story on this subject told by Dr. Franklin; and the following, narrated by the Honourable Mr. Boudinot, in his “*Star in the West*,” is very creditable to Indian sagacity.

This gentleman, as one of the agents of the society in Scotland for propagating the gospel, had been instrumental in fitting out two missionaries, who were sent to the Delaware nation. The chiefs were called together, and after deliberating for fourteen days, sent back the missionaries, very courteously, with an answer; which “made great acknowledgments for the favour we had done them. They rejoiced exceedingly at our happiness in being thus favoured by the Great Spirit, and felt very grateful that we had condescended to re-

“member our brethren in the wilderness. But
 “they could not help recollecting that we had a
 “people among us, who, because they differed from
 “us in colour, we had made slaves of, and made
 “them suffer great hardships, and lead miserable
 “lives. Now, they could not see any reason, if a
 “people being black, entitled us thus to deal with
 “them, why a red colour would not equally justify
 “the same treatment. They therefore had deter-
 “mined to wait, to see whether all the black peo-
 “ple amongst us were made thus happy and joyful,
 “before they could put confidence in our promises,
 “for they thought a people who had suffered so
 “much, and so long, by our means, should be en-
 “titled to our first attentions;—that, therefore,
 “they had sent back the two missionaries, with
 “many thanks,—promising that, when they saw
 “the black people among us restored to freedom
 “and happiness, they would gladly receive our
 “missionaries. This is what, in any other case,
 “would be called close reasoning, and is too morti-
 “fying a fact to make further remarks upon.”

This brings me to the expression of an opinion
 that I have for some time entertained,—and in ex-
 planation of which you must indulge me with a
 little more patience. I am strongly inclined to be-
 lieve, that the negro is much more susceptible of
 civilization, and the improvements that follow it,
 than the Indian; and though I would neglect noth-
 ing humanity could suggest in favour of the latter,
 I apprehend that the opportunity for doing good is,

beyond measure, more extensive in the case of the African, than in that of the American aboriginal. The Indian race has been constantly, and is now daily decreasing ;—the course has been going on so long, that there is some reason for supposing it is owing to some inherent and immutable principles. The African, on the contrary, is steadily increasing ; an increase, under all circumstances, that must make every humane and reflecting individual, look with painful solicitude to its future consequences.

This is a topic, on which an inhabitant of your state and one of mine, can seldom converse without restraint, and giving rise to unpleasant feelings. From all I have observed, I am convinced, that it will always produce injurious consequences, for the people of these, or the middle states, to be the movers in any of the questions relating to slavery. They have for a long period taken no steps, and the proprietors in some of the slave-holding states, impelled by far-sighted and humane views, have commenced, of their own accord, measures that may gradually lead to a system of amelioration and prevention. The jealousy of the citizens in those sections, on this point, appears to me not only natural, but reasonable ; they cannot see with calmness persons undertaking to legislate on a subject, which involves exclusively their property and safety in the most intimate manner. It is impossible they should not see and feel the evil, who live in the midst of it ; and it is equally so that they should not be anxious to provide gradual re-

medies for what creates so much well-founded anxiety ; which the humane have so long deplored, and which their greatest statesmen consider as a stain on the past, a misfortune for the present, and pregnant with the most extensive calamities for future times. All we can do advantageously, is to second your efforts to the utmost in our power, but to leave the preparation of all measures to originate with yourselves.*

I have said that the negro is more susceptible of civilization and improvement than the Indian, and the proofs of it, both negative and positive, are abundant.—No Indian family can be found living in a civilized state, educating their children, and accumulating property. Now, the cases of negroes having done this, and under every disadvantage, may be found in different places. This class of men were formerly slaves among us, and are still looked upon with contempt.—They have every thing to struggle against : yet many have obtained a degree of consideration, in spite of the strongest prejudices, by the force of good conduct. They have, in several instances, acquired a very comfortable property, and conducted themselves with perfect propriety. A much greater improvement may be expected among them in future, because their children are now almost all of them sent to school,

* Since this was written, the deplorable "Missouri Question" has arisen ; the author never would have imagined, that the enlightened statesmen of the South would have contended for the extension of slavery, which their ablest men have represented to be such a dreadful curse on the country.

and a fairer chance will be given to estimate their capacities. I was much struck by a circumstance I have before mentioned, that in two of the degenerate Indian tribes, under the care of the state of Massachusetts, the two most respectable individuals were of African origin.

The negro is a more gay, light-hearted, social being, than the Indian ; becomes easily and permanently domesticated. Much less pains have been taken to improve their minds, and they have produced more beneficial results. They have been more degraded, by being kept in a state of hopeless slavery, and the few who were emancipated from that, were still treated with contempt by the meanest white men. They are fonder of cheerful amusements, and in no degree so prone to drunkenness as the Indian. Perhaps they may not be susceptible of the highest degree of civilization ; they may not have sufficient intelligence and command of their passions, to form the citizens of a free government. But in a lower scale of existence, in a state of things that is consistent with the two extremes of misery and splendour, under a government, where a privileged few govern, what Spencer calls, "*the rascal many*;"—for a moderate despotism, in short, they have shown themselves fully adequate. The court of St. Domingo was as splendid, as many that it aped ; nor was it only in this frivolity of titles, ribands, embroidery, or parade, that it was successful ; but in sagacious precautions for defence, and the greatest energy and watchfulness for carrying

its plans into execution, it has shown clear and commanding views. Now, it must be recollected, that this has been done, not by a people who were in any state of preparation, but by men who passed from a condition of the most abject slavery at once into power ;—and that they have maintained themselves against a most formidable combination of secret perfidy and open force, and in all probability will now perpetuate an independent, insular government, in the midst of a chain of islands, whose population is composed of the same materials, and which it may be expected, will be in some way, hereafter assimilated to them.

Whether this opinion of their greater capacity for improvement, relatively to the Indian, be well founded or not, the field of experiment is beyond comparison wider. The blacks are fifteen or twenty times as numerous as the red men now ; and the latter are dwindling away every year, while the former are portentously increasing. The amount of good to be done, will be sufficient to satiate the thirst of the most ardent benevolence ; and the difficulty of effecting it, will be great enough to occupy the most intelligent ambition. The dangers to be averted, are of the most dreadful description ; the advantage to be gained, of the most beneficent character. Those who engage in it, need have no fears of being left without employment ; the process must be gradual and cautious, to be useful, and will not be completed by one generation.

Thinking, as I do, that the states which have no slaves, should decline the exercise of any right to originate measures on this momentous subject; I might escape, as one of their citizens, from the difficulty of the subject, and feel bound to make no suggestions of what might be practicable. But those who dread the consequences of innovation, and refuse to take any measures at all, say it is very easy to declaim about humanity and policy;—but that nothing can be done, and that the least change will lead to a long train of mischievous consequences and ultimate ruin. But reasoners of this description are not aware, that on this, as on many other subjects, to make no change exposes you to the most fearful kind of alteration: not to accommodate yourself to the spirit and circumstances of your age, leaves you in a situation, which their progress will soon render awkward and defenceless;—that standing still, when others are advancing, is virtually retreating; that every nation and every legislature, that do not float onward with the flood of public sentiment, but still adhere to their old prejudices and fears, will be infallibly submerged by the very tide, that would have safely carried them on its bosom.

The coarser mode of proceeding seems to have been resorted to in some places,—the plan of obviating danger by increased severity;—this will answer very well where the thing dreaded is temporary in its nature, and where if it does not palliate, will exterminate. But this is not a case of that

kind ; and a very little reflection must convince enlightened men, that greater severity, which is always the ready resort of rash and narrow minds, will here only exasperate the disorder, and inevitably bring on convulsions.

The first step was taken by the nation in abolishing the infamous foreign traffic in slaves ; the next point will be a close restriction and watchful regulation of the domestic transportation, and this falls within the jurisdiction of local authority. The commencement that has been made, towards attempting a colony for the free blacks in Africa, argues a wise and liberal policy. No force can be used ; but if a suitable situation should be obtained, where this class could find the inducement of bettering their situation, it might be the means of not only relieving us, but of introducing civilization into that barbarous continent. To get rid wholly of two millions of a very prolific race, cannot enter into the most extravagant mind ; it is a population that is entailed upon us forever ; what is the best mode of regulating it, is the only inquiry. Total emancipation is quite out of the question ; it would be attended with innumerable evils, if it were practicable. The only expedient seems to be a cautious and gradual amelioration ; till the slothful, sulky, smarting slaves, should be raised to the condition of feudal tenants, or a Russian peasantry ;—that their personal condition, though heavily restricted, should not be entirely without the pale of law and humanity ;—that their situation should be so far improved,

that those who are the property of the poorest or most unfeeling, should be as happy, as those who are now the property of the wealthy and humane planters ;—that religious and moral instruction should be allowed them ;—that families should not be torn asunder for sale ; and that they should have a right of self-purchase under certain stipulations, one of which should be that of leaving the country.

A system of this kind might be gradually introduced, and the proprietor would derive at least equal emoluments, and certainly greater security. The shocking scenes which are sometimes occasioned by a brutal ignorant owner, would be prevented ; the degrading aspect of slavery would be softened ; its deleterious effects on freemen mitigated,—and the fearful anxiety, which must rather increase than diminish, would be done away. Whatever is effected must begin with you,—we can only second your exertions, and with the deepest sympathy for your attempts to diminish this great mass of evil and misery, cry, God speed you.

LETTER XIII.

SCENERY AND CLIMATE.

DEAR SIR,

You have perhaps resided long enough on this side of the Atlantic, to perceive that our climate is as different as our scenery from that of your own country. If I touch a little on what is peculiar in each, with some comparative allusions, you will readily know where I am mistaken, and perhaps your own observations on these subjects will be in some degree facilitated.

Some foreigners from the continent of Europe, who are struck with the liberty and happiness we enjoy, and who still remember the mild climates they have left, assert, that we should be too fortunate, if we had as fine a climate as they possess ; and that the asperity of our weather is the only drawback we suffer, the only evil to be put in the balance against the sufferings of Europe, by the emigrant who wishes to make a right estimate between the two countries. The natives of the south of Europe cannot bear our snow and icy air, and those of the north pant under the fervid heat of our summers. The one sighs after lemon-trees flourishing openly in January, and the other regrets a temperature ad-

mirably adapted to turnips, while he is sweltering in one, that makes the Indian corn grow *audibly*.

There is one point in our climate that occasions most of these reproaches, and is in truth a serious objection, and this is, its great inequality. There would be fewer complaints if it were steadily bad ;—but the occasional beauty and perfection it presents, enhances its inconveniences, by a feeling of disappointment. Greece and Italy cannot boast of more exquisite days than we are frequently favoured with in the summer and autumn ; and the most fog-smitten, ice-bound regions in Europe, can endure no worse meteorological sufferings, than are sometimes inflicted on us. This is an evil from which the country can never be exempted, though it will be moderated a little by the effect of cultivation. This amelioration may never happen to the degree which many persons have anticipated ;—but that some change has been produced, almost every man can testify from his own experience.

The average results of the thermometer through the year, compared with the same transatlantic data, would give a very imperfect knowledge of our climate. The averages that would approach the nearest in result, are produced from very opposite circumstances ;—there, they are drawn from a succession of moderate, though variable temperatures ; here, from great extremes, which often last a considerable period. The climate of Flanders, and some parts of Germany, would exhibit the same average with some districts here, that ripen the

melon and Indian corn,—which you must enter Gascony and Provence, Spain and Portugal, to find in Europe. Many of the richest productions of Ceres and Pomona may be raised among us, if they can reach maturity during the transient and fervid heat of our summers; while others, such as the grape, whose tardy growth requires a long exemption from frost, is always uncertain.

The position of our continent, and the course of the winds, will always give us an unequal climate, and one abounding in contrasts. In the latitude of 50° on the north-west coast of America, the weather is milder even, than in the same parallel in Europe; —the wind, three quarters of the year, comes off the Pacific: in the same latitude on the eastern side, the country is hardly worth inhabiting, under the dreary length of cold, produced by the succession of winds across a frozen continent. The wind and the sun too often carry on the contest here, which they exerted on the poor traveller in the fable; and we are in doubt to which we shall yield. The changes that cultivation, and planetary influence, if there be such a thing, can create, are very gradual. It seems to be a general opinion, that the cold is more broken now, though the totals of heat and cold may be nearly the same as they were fifty years ago. The winters, particularly, have commenced later. The autumn is warmer and the spring colder. We are still subject to the same caprices; a flight of snow in May, a frost in June, and sometimes in every

month in the year ; and Æolus indulges his servants in stranger freaks and extravagances here, than elsewhere : yet the severe cold seldom sets in before January ; the snow is less and later, and on the sea-coast does not, on an average, afford more than a month's sleighing.

These contrasts in our climate occasion some very picturesque effects,—some that would be considered phenomena by persons unaccustomed to them. It blends together the circumstances of very distant regions in Europe. Thus, when the earth lies buried under a deep covering of snow, in Europe, the clime is so far to the north, that the sun rises but little above the horizon, and his daily visit is a very short one ;—his feeble rays hardly illumine a chilly sky, that harmonizes with the dreary waste it covers ; but here, the same surface reflects a dazzling brilliancy from rays that strike at the same angle, at which they do the dome of St. Peter's. The plains of Siberia and the *Campagna di Roma*, are here combined ;—we have the snow of the one, and the sun of the other, at the same period. While his rays, in the month of March, are expanding the flowers and blossoms at Albano and Tivoli, they are here falling on a wide, uninterrupted covering of snow,—producing a dazzling brilliancy that is almost insupportable. A moonlight at this season is equally remarkable, and its effects can be more easily endured. Our moon is nearly the same with that moon of Naples, which

Carracioli told the king of England was “superior to his majesty’s sun,”—when this surface of spotless snow is shone upon by this moon at its full, and reflects back its beams, the light, indeed, is not that of day, but it takes away all appearance of night ; —the witch and the spectre would shrink from its exposure :

“ It is not night ;—’tis but the day-light sick ;
“ It looks a little paler.”

The climate is more open on the sea-coast, and more unequal than in the interior. Rhode-Island, and some of the islands on that part of the coast, approach more nearly than any other part of our country does, to the mild temperature of England. The snow lies but a short time, and the extremes of heat and cold are a little mitigated. Particular situations will possess advantages over others, either from the nature of the soil, the position of hills, or the joint effect of both ;—but circumstances of this kind have not here been minutely attended to. In Europe, these local peculiarities are well understood and improved,—and a favoured valley, or well-exposed slope, will possess a reputation over all others in its vicinity. Observation will gradually lead us to remark the best positions, and to appreciate the superiority which certain localities intrinsically exhibit.

On the sea-coast, the winters are milder, but the obnoxious east winds are more severely felt in the spring than they are in the interior ;—the whole

coast of Massachusetts Bay is remarkably exposed to their influence. Some compensation, however, is derived for their harshness and virulence in the spring, by their refreshing and salutary breezes in the summer, when they frequently allay the sultry heat, and prevent it from becoming oppressive. Although a district favourably situated, will enjoy an average of climate two or three degrees better than those in its neighbourhood, yet, generally, the progress of the climate is pretty regular as you follow the coast of the United States, from north-east to south-west. I am induced to think that our great rivers have some connexion with the gradations of climate ;—that every large river you pass, makes a difference of two or three degrees in the averages of the thermometer. The position of mountains will affect the climate essentially ;—but these rivers, whose course upwards is northerly, will still, in general, be lines of demarkation. The Kennebec, the Piscataqua, the Merrimac, Connecticut, Hudson, and Delaware, all of which run from the north, or north-west, will furnish some data for this theory. The difference, for instance, between Portsmouth and Boston, between New-York and Philadelphia, is, in both cases, very considerable ; more than is produced in other districts of wider extent, where no great river intervenes. Here there are two in each of these cases. I do not mean to give it to you as a positive theory, but merely as a supposition, that every large river makes an increase of three degrees in the cold of winter, at least in the extremes of it.

One of the most agreeable peculiarities in our climate is a period in the autumn, called the *Indian Summer*, it happens in October, commencing a few days earlier or later, as the season may be. The temperature is delightful and the weather differing in its character from that of any other season. The air is filled with a slight haze, like smoke, which some persons suppose it to be ; the wind is south west, and there is a vernal softness in the atmosphere ; yet the different altitude of the sun from what it has in the summer, makes it in other respects very unlike that season. This singular occurrence in our climate seems to be to summer, what a vivid recollection of past joys is to the reality. The Indians have some pleasing superstitions respecting it, “ They believe that it is caused by a wind, which
 “ comes immediately from the Court of their great
 “ and benevolent god Cautantowwit, or the south-
 “ western god, the god, who is superior to all other
 “ beings, who sends them every blessing which they
 “ enjoy, and to whom the souls of their fathers
 “ go after their decease.”*

There would be no more effectual way of showing the striking differences between our climate and that of Europe, than by arranging the months in each country according to their quality. The same months have a very dissimilar character. Generally speaking, the spring is finer than the autumn, in Europe, which is just the reverse of what happens in this country. Nations, through the

* Note to Dr. Freeman’s occasional Sermons.

influence of literature, obtain from each other maxims and prejudices, that are wholly inapplicable. We are especially exposed to this, as regards your country, from the identity of language. But when your poets abuse November, and praise May, we cannot sympathise with them. Indeed, with regard to this latter month, half the world are led into absurdity. The poets of Greece might eulogize the month of May ;—those of Italy might follow them with safety ; and from these two, all the rest of mankind have derived the habit of talking about the “charming month of May.” This is often ridiculous in Paris,—more so, perhaps, than it is at London ; but in this country it is a downright insult to the feelings of plain prose, and our native rhymers have seldom the indecency to praise a month, which is the most arrant jilt of the twelve, and is so cold, deceptive, and capricious, under an occasional smile ; it is now only practised by those, who have got their ideas and names by rote. In arranging the months, there may be some variation in the fancy of different people ;—but in all cases, the position of certain months would be very different from their rank in Europe. If I were to place them according to my own opinion of their merits, they would stand thus :—June, July, September, August, October, November, May, December, January, April, February, March. But there would be many different plans for marshalling them,—and chaos would come again, if their order were at our disposal. Fortunately, their government is be-

yond our reach ;—we cannot stop the wheels on which they revolve.

In connexion with our climate, the appearance of our atmosphere may be considered ; the lover of picturesque beauty will find this a fruitful source of it. The same inequalities will be found here, that take place in the measure of heat and cold, and an equal number of contrasts and varieties. We have many of those days, when a murky vapourishness is diffused through the air, dimming the lustre of the sun, and producing just such tones of light and colour as would be marked in the calendar of Newfoundland or the Hebrides, for a bright, fair day. We have again others, in which even the transparency and purity of the tropics, and all the glowing, mellow hues of Greece and Naples, are blended together, to shed a hue of paradise on every object. I have already spoken of the intense brilliancy of a winter moonlight, when the air has a polar temperature ; the same brilliancy and a greater clearness is often found in the month of June, and sometimes in July, with the warmth of the Equator. There are, occasionally, in the summer and autumn such magical effects of light, such a universal tone of brilliant colouring, that the very air seems tinged ; and an aspect of such harmonious splendour is thrown over every object, that the attention of the most indifferent is awakened, and the lovers of the beautiful in nature enjoy the most lively delight. These are the kind of tints, which even the matchless pencil of Claude vainly

endeavoured to imitate. They occur a few times every year, a little before sunset, under a particular state of the air and position of the clouds. These beautiful appearances are not so frequent indeed here, as they are at Naples; all those warm and delicate colours which we see in Neapolitan pictures, occur there more often; but I have frequently observed the hills to the south of Boston exhibiting, towards sunset, the same exquisite hues which Vesuvius more frequently presents, and which the Neapolitans, in their paintings of it, always adopt. The vivid beauty which I now speak of, is rare and transient; but we often enjoy the charms of a transparent atmosphere, where objects stand in bold relief, and even distant ones will present all their lines and angles, clear and sharp, from the deep distant sky, as on the shores of Greece; and we gaze at sunset on gorgeous skies, where all the magnificence that form and colour can combine, is accumulated, to enrapture the eye, and render description hopeless.

The scenery of this country will have struck you at once, as very different from that of Europe:—this difference is partly intrinsic, and partly accidental,—arising out of the kinds and degrees of cultivation. The most obvious and extensive view in which it differs, is the redundancy of forest. A vast forest, to a person who had never seen one, would excite almost as strong sensations, as the sight of the ocean to him, who beheld it for the first time,—and in both cases, a long continuance

of the prospect becomes tiresome. From some of our hills, the spectator looks over an expanse of woods, bounded by the horizon, and slightly chequered with cultivation. The view is grand and imposing at first, but it will be more agreeable, and afford more lasting gratification, when the relative proportions of wood and open ground are reversed. The most cultivated parts of these states, approach the nearest to some of the most covered parts in England, that are not an actual forest. We have nothing like the Downs, on your southern coast,—and fatiguing as an eternal forest may be, it is less so than those dreary wastes, as destitute of objects, as the mountain swell of the ocean. We have still so much wood, that even in the oldest cultivated parts of the country, it is very difficult to find a panoramic view of any extent, where some patches of the native forest are not to be found. I know of but one exception, which is from the steeple of the church in Ipswich in Essex, Massachusetts. This is one of our oldest towns; the prospect will put you in mind of the scenery of your own country:—I need not add, that it is a very pleasing one, and will repay you for the slight trouble of ascending the steeple.

The trees, though there are too many of them at least, in masses, must please the eye of an European, from their variety and beauty, as well as novelty. The richness of our trees and shrubs has always excited the admiration of botanists, and the lovers of landscape gardening. There can be noth-

ing nobler, than the appearance of some of the oaks and beeches in England, and the walnuts and chestnuts in France and Italy. The vast size of these spreading trees is only surpassed by some of our sycamores on the banks of the Ohio. Our oaks may sometimes be seen of the same size,—and the towering white pine and hemlock reach a height that I had never seen attained by trees in Europe;—but, for grandeur of appearance, we must rely, in the first instance, on the American elm, that has been planted for ornament. Its colour, its form, and its size, place it much before the European elm; it is one of our most majestic trees. There are many varieties of it, very distinct,—yet not so numerous as of the oaks, walnuts, and some others. Of the former, you know we have between thirty and forty different species, and a great number of species exist of all our principal trees. This variety, in the hands of taste, would be made productive of the finest effects in ornamental planting, of which you may find more specimens in your own country than in this, though only a part of our riches in this way have been transplanted by your gardeners. You will remark the fresh and healthy look of our forest, as well as fruit trees, compared with those of all the northern parts of Europe. The humidity of that atmosphere nourishes the mosses, and a green coating over the trunks and branches, that give the aspect of disease and decay. You will often observe the clean and smooth bark of our trees, of all kinds:—among the

forest trees, particularly the walnut, maple, beech, birch, &c. will be seen entirely free from moss or rust of any kind,—and their trunks form fine contrasts with the leaves. You will have too much of forest in this country, to go in pursuit of one ;—but should you happen to visit Naushawn, one of the Elizabeth Islands, you will see the most beautiful insulated forests in the United States, with less of that ragged, lank look, which our native forests commonly present, from the trees struggling with each other for the light, and running up to a great height, with few or no branches ; but this one exhibits the tufted, rounded masses, which are found in the groves of your parks.

You will be almost ready to exclaim, with the capricious fair one in Pope, “O ! odious, odious trees,”—but you must have patience a moment longer, while I mention a peculiarity which you will witness in autumn, that will affect a lover of landscape scenery, like yourself, on seeing it the first time, with surprise as well as delight. The rich and mellow tints of the forest, at that season of the year, have often furnished subjects for the painter and the poet, in Europe ;—but it will hardly prepare you for the sights our woods exhibit. I have never seen a representation of them attempted in painting ;—it would probably be grotesque. Besides all the shades of brown and green, which you have in European trees, there are the most brilliant and glaring colours,—bright yellow, and scarlet, for instance,—not merely on single leaves, but in

masses of whole trees, with all their foliage thus tinged. I do not know that it has ever been accounted for; it may perhaps, be owing to the frosts coming earlier here than in Europe, and falling on the leaves, while the sap is yet copious, before they have begun to dry up and fall off. However this may be, the colouring is wonderful;—the walnut is turned to the brightest yellow, the maple, to scarlet, &c. Our trees put on this harlequin dress about the first of October. I leave to your imagination, which can never reach the reality, to fancy the appearance of such scenes as you may behold at this season;—a cloudless sky, and transparent atmosphere,—a clear blue lake, with meadows of light, delicate green, backed by hills and dales, of these parti-coloured, gorgeous forests, are often combined, to form the most enchanting views.*

* The reader who has any relic of veneration for Pomona and the Hamadryads, will excuse this supplementary note. We have several individual trees that are remarkable, I can only mention two or three. In Salem, there is a pear tree still producing fruit, that was planted by Governor Endicott in his garden in 1630, and which is now owned by his descendants. At Sagadahoc in Maine, when the French had a footing in 1689, there is an apple tree with some remains of life, amidst the ruins of their dwellings. The trunk is nearly the size of a hogshead and entirely hollow. It was almost a century after before any apple trees were planted in the neighbouring country. In Hartford the oak yet stands, in which the Connecticut charter was secreted, during the disastrous administration of Andross, when all the New-England charters were taken away. Governor Andross went to Hartford to obtain the charter of Connecticut; when the Council were assembled with Andross in the evening, while the destined victim was lying on the table, the lights were suddenly extinguished, Captain Wadsworth seized the Charter and hid it in this tree, which even then, in 1692, was hollow with age. This tree forms an appropriate counterpart to the "royal oak" of England. The most celebrated of all our trees however, was the *Liberty tree* in Boston, which fell a sacrifice to party vengeance, and was cut down when the British troops got possession of the town. It was an elm of vast size of which

Though you will not find in this country, any of those extensive districts of uninterrupted cultivation, which are so common in Europe; and though there is such a predominance of forest in our scenery, still there are situations presenting a noble appearance of fertile soil and productive agriculture. The beautiful river Connecticut, as it glides by some of the handsomest villages in Vermont, New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, and the state to which it gives a name, is, through almost its whole extent, bordered with fertile banks in high cultivation. These lands, those at least that are within reach of the river floods, have here the common appellation of *intervale*. This species of land, on all our rivers, is the most valuable we possess, and gives perennially the most exuberant crops. There are some extended tracts of it near Northampton, for example, which rival the aspect of the richest plains in Flanders or Italy.

Almost the whole of New-England is a region of gentle hill and dale, except where in the northern or western parts it rises into mountains. The whole surface is chequered with cultivation, excepting some portions of Maine. The practice of the country is not to build in compact villages, as in Europe, but the dwellings and farms are scatter-

only the stump remains. Many transactions leading to the revolution took place beneath it. Trees in various places in this country and Europe, were named after it : in France at one time every municipality had one, but in that country they never flourished and finally perished root and branch under Napoleon. Their fate as usual was commemorated with a calembourg, untranslatable. *De tous les arbres de la liberté il n'en reste plus que l'écorce.*

ed along the roads. You would not get a correct idea of the population of the country, in passing through it by the mail roads. These are generally the turnpikes that have been made within a few years, and connect the principal towns by the shortest routes; passing in strait lines over rocky hills, and through swamps, offering no marks of cultivation or inhabitants, even in the midst of a populous section, while the old public roads in the vicinity, which were established with little reference to the shortest lines between remote places, wind their way through a long line of continuous farms and dwellings. The general good that was educed from these turnpikes, was, in the opinion of some persons, out of "seeming evil."—When the spirit for this kind of improvement was very rife in Massachusetts, a farmer, who had come to oppose the petition for a turnpike, was standing outside the bar of the representatives' chamber, while a gentleman was talking with another about the purchase of a farm. He took part in the conversation, without any introduction, a circumstance not wholly unexampled in this country, and addressing himself to the person who contemplated making a purchase;—"You talk, Sir, of buying a farm? Yes, Sir.—Do you wish to have it on a high road, where the traveller will pass your house? Certainly I do.—Well, Sir, then do you go right into the middle of the woods, and begin a farm any where, and it is an even chance that you will have a turnpike by your house in a year or two: but if

you fix yourself on any established road, where the mail and public travelling passes, I vow it will be taken from you, before you have got warm in your house."

The most pleasing of our rural scenes, and which are frequently met with, are composed of the following materials; a farm-house shaded with two or three spreading elms, large barns, for not only the grain and the hay, (which are stacked in Europe,) but where all our animals, are housed,—an extensive orchard, one or two fields of that noble plant, the Indian corn, beautiful in all its stages; a small brook with a green meadow; and within sight, if not adjoining, the woodland that supplies the common fuel of the country.

Our picturesque objects of an artificial kind, are vastly fewer than those in older countries. The total absence of ruins, deprives us of what is an abundant source of associations in Europe. No artist could be reconciled to this deficiency, and in truth we have no other way to turn the edge of reproach on this account, than by boldly assuming, that the landscape is better without them:—that the sight of these grisly, hideous remains, conjure up the ideas of baronial oppression, feudal slavery, and monkish delusion;—that in those mouldering dungeons were formerly immured the victims of priestly or lordly tyranny;—and those ruined walls once protected a few lawless despots, who carried on a petty but cruel warfare for personal revenge, and held a wretched peasantry in abject depen-

dence;—that they recall times of ignorance and misrule, of barbarism and murder, and awaken painful recollections in the midst of the most smiling scenery;—that in this happy region of freedom, where no slave exists, and no oppression ever dwelt, the earth is encumbered with no mark or trophy of despotism; no monument attests a period of anterior degradation, and wherever the eye turns, it beholds the unpolluted soil of liberty!

If this ranting will not do, I must frankly give up the point, and acknowledge our want of this class of objects. There is another of a humbler and more pleasing kind, that are also rarely found here; I mean the straw roofed cottage, the latticed window, the antique mansion, the ivied church. Here and there an old farm-house may be found, that would serve a painter's turn, and frequently a distant steeple peeps over the trees, that has a pleasing effect, till you come near the building it belongs to, when all idea of the picturesque is at once annihilated. Our houses are plain, square, regular things, suggesting at once that our carpenters are good workmen, and that the country is in a flourishing state, which is so spotted over with white painted dwellings. An artist could seldom get a study into his port-folio from one of these habitations. In the paucity of subjects of this nature, I may mention one that is fast disappearing. This is the well-post, where a crotched tree is made to support a slender pole, from one end of which hangs the rod and bucket over the well, and balanced by a

log or a few stones fastened to the other.* A contrivance of this kind, which goes back to the primitive ages of the world, may still be found attached to some old farm-houses; but in this case I believe the house will almost always be of one story, or in the old manner of building, with two stories in front, and a long roof, sloping down to one behind. —These rude machines are fast giving way to pumps or aqueducts, which are doubtless more convenient. The science of hydraulics has done much for the comfort of mankind, but it has done away one of the simplest, and one of the grandest, classes of artificial objects. The rural well-pole, which a few rude hands can erect, and the colossal aqueduct, still displaying some of the noblest efforts of Roman grandeur, are both superseded by the simplest principle of that science.

The mountain scenery of this country is inferior to that of Europe, not only in elevation and massiveness, but in beauty and grandeur of outline. We have nothing in these respects to compare with the Pyrennees and the Alps. The highest mountains in the whole region of North America, on the Atlantic side, are in the state of New-Hampshire; these which are modestly called the White Hills, do not rise above 6000 feet. The mountains of Vermont and Massachusetts do not exceed 4000 feet. These mountains cannot fail of exhibiting

* Dr. Clarke in his travels has a vignette containing a well-pole in Norway, coeval with the earliest ages of Scandinavia, and exactly resembling those near old farm houses in New-England.

some grand and beautiful scenery, but still not equal to that of the European continent. The outline of our mountains is more rounding, and tamer, what is significantly termed, hog-back ; there are fewer of those astounding precipices, of those deep and gloomy ravines, of those abrupt elevations, and towering peaks ; and the sublimity of the eternal glaciers of Mont-Blanc must always be wanting. It must be remembered, however, that all the treasures of our mountains have not been laid open ; they have been very partially explored by the artist or the man of science. It is but recently that their height was accurately ascertained. Their interior has been little examined ; their exterior rarely portrayed. They may possess mines of wealth for the mineralogist and the artist, which future efforts will develope.

After admitting the inferiority of our mountain landscape generally to that of Europe, we may be allowed to bring forward our water scenery, in which the United States possess a decided superiority. From the vast cataract of Niagara down to the smallest cascade ; from our ocean lakes to the delightful ponds of water, that embellish almost every part of the eastern states, there is no form of grandeur or beauty that may not be discovered. Waterfalls are very abundant. Our streams are remarkable for flowing over different levels ; not a brook or a river but precipitates itself more than once between its source and its receptacle. Our rivers are navigable for long distances, after their

course is interrupted by falls, which naturally grow more and more numerous as they are ascended. A waterfall in Europe, is the most uncommon of all the ingredients of landscape. The falls of the Rhine, which attract the admiration of so many travellers, would hardly engage observation among the numbers, that surpass them here. Two-thirds of the course of our rivers would be useless to transportation, were it not for locks and canals; while in Europe, the Thames, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne, the Danube, and many others, may be ascended from their estuaries almost to their sources, without meeting a single cascade.

It is difficult to single out of such a number, the falls that are most worthy of your observation. The Kennebeck, Androscoggin, Saco, Merrimac, Connecticut, with their tributaries, and many streams of inferior note, will offer you specimens. In some instances, the road is carried over bridges so near to waterfalls, that the traveller is deafened by their noise, and sometimes moistened with their spray; the Pawtucket, in Rhode-Island, the Saco and Androscoggin, in Maine, are instances among many others. None of these falls are very remarkable for their height in any one leap, but are generally from ten to twenty or thirty feet, yet are, in several rivers, repeated at short distances. In many cases the natural beauties are defaced, by the mills they support; but there are others where the effect is heightened;—in this latter class, two or three of the cascades on Charles's River may be

mentioned, and the most beautiful of these, what are called the Upper Falls in Newton, a few miles from Boston, exhibit a piece of scenery worth visiting.

Next in beauty to falls of water, is the class of lake scenery, where our possessions are, if possible, still more extensive ; and with the same moderation that we call our mountains, hills, we call our lakes, ponds. There are several extensive sheets of water, but only three that are commonly called lakes ; Champlain in Vermont, Winipiseogee in New-Hampshire and Mooshead in Maine. Lake George is the most beautiful lake in the whole country ; it is just without our limits, in the state of New-York ; it was called by the French the Lake of the Holy Sacrament, from the extreme limpidness of its waters. This quality, for which it is very remarkable, joined to the mountainous character of its shores, and innumerable islands, enables it to vie with any other in the world in beautiful effect. On a smaller scale, we have numbers of these lakes that form exquisite pictures,—they are to be found every where, sometimes showing a bright gleam in the midst of a dark untouched forest, and reflecting no living forms, save those of some wild bird or animal, and in other situations, surrounded by meadows and farms. You may form some idea how many of these ponds may be found, when told that within a dozen miles of Boston there are more than twenty of them, and in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, not of very great

extent, there are said to be sixty. There are only a few instances, in which the beautiful sites on their borders have been taken up for country residences ; but the advantages they offer to the eye of taste are innumerable ; and where they are surrounded by high ground, there is no evil in being near them. Some of our most beautiful villas will yet be created on their shores.

One peculiar spot in the vicinity of Boston you must not omit visiting, if you are fond of marine scenery ; and what islander,—and from your island too, is not animated by the sight of the ocean ?—There is a remarkable promontory, called, in old maps, *the Great Nahant*, nine miles from Boston by water, and fifteen by land. A peninsula of very irregular outline and surface, five or six miles in circumference, is united by a beach of a mile and a quarter long to the coast, from which it projects so as to form a right angle with it. The upper part of this beach is composed of loose sand and stones ; where the water flows, it is quite compact, and at low tide a dozen carriages may pass abreast on the sand, which appears smooth as a mirror, and so hard, that the horse's hoof scarcely leaves a mark. There is also another beach of the same description, about one-third the length of the first ; nothing can be finer than a ride over these smooth, hard courses, while the surf is rolling up and bursting in foam alongside, that runs and recedes under the horse's feet, as if in sport. The coast of this peninsula is defended from the fury of the sea, by

masses of ragged precipitous rocks, which at the southern extremities overhang it at the height of more than a hundred feet. There are half a dozen farm houses, which afford the only places of shelter—it can hardly be called entertainment—to great numbers who frequent the spot for bathing, fishing, or shooting.

It is surprising that this place should have been so long destitute of all tolerable accommodation for visitors. It might be one of the most delightful sea-bathing places in the world: to such as are fond of fishing, its shores afford endless sport. Some gentlemen have turned their attention to it of late, and it may soon become a place of great resort. On the whole coast of the United States, at least from Portland to the southern side of the Mexican Gulf, there is not such a promontory as this. It presents some of the finest marine views that can be seen. One of its accompaniments, a league distant, is called Egg-rock, from being the home of vast numbers of birds, who make their nests upon it; its shape and colours are highly picturesque.

Nahant commands a prospect over a large part of the bay of Massachusetts, with the finest portion of its shores; it approaches so near to the lower harbour of Boston, as almost to form one of its defences; overseeing all its islands and channels; the forts, with the town itself, rising in the back ground. The *seascape* here is always interesting; the materials for a picture abundant: in the first place, the ocean, whose incessant movement and

boundless expanse engage the mind in reveries; the extensive shores, various in their appearance, and spotted over with towns, villages, and groves; the islands and the disastrous rocks, of which there are several to excite the dread of mariners; the light-houses, which always raise agreeable associations in the mind, being one of the few objects that are erected, in a spirit of universal comity, for the common good of all mankind; and, lastly, a gay animation is thrown over the whole, by the scene being interspersed with numerous vessels of all kinds, which lead the spectator, who overlooks the entrance of a great commercial mart, to sympathize in imagination with some of the liveliest joys and regrets of the human mind,—the sensations that are passing in the bosoms of those before him, in “the outward and the homeward bound,”—the grief of departure, the exultation of return. The south-east point of the peninsula resembles very strongly the picture in the travels of Anacharsis, of Cape Sunium near Athens; only that the beautiful temple on the brink of the Grecian Cape, whose harmonious architecture contrasts so strikingly with the rude rocks beneath it, is here wanting. Perhaps hereafter, when Nahant shall possess a handsome marine village, and become the summer residence of many families, a church may be raised on these rocks to the worship of that *eternal God, who alone spreads out the heavens, and rules the raging of the sea.*

In travelling through the country, you will see cultivation in all its different stages, from the rude

log-house of those who have just commenced an establishment in the midst of the forest, to farms in the older districts, that have been cultivated for nearly two centuries. You will see a country almost every where susceptible of profitable cultivation, with but a few spots absolutely sterile, and some of the highest fertility. The surface is agreeably variegated, and copiously watered; and no where those dreary wastes, like the heaths and downs of Europe. There are considerable tracts, on the sea coast however, where the soil is full as meagre as that of the heaths; they are now kept for woodland. If ever this wood is suffered to run out, these spots will become perfectly barren.

You will rarely perceive any marks of decay, but almost every where the indications of prosperity gradually increasing. This aspect of general comfort and happiness, will be a substitute for the want of many interesting objects that are found in Europe, and which are too often accompanied with appearances of misery. Though you will behold no magnificent castles or villas, you will find, every where, substantial dwellings, and more appearances of wealth, than displays of taste. In the vicinity of the larger towns, there are many handsome country seats, laid out on those principles, which we have borrowed from you, and which ornament every part of your island. Our improvements in this way are most of them recent, and taken from your country, from which we have derived so much, and towards which we should feel so much affec-

tion, if political animosities did not interfere, to exasperate the passions. This taste is not yet generally spread, but will soon make its way,—and then the number of fences that surround the better kind of dwellings, and are intended to be ornamental, though they have an awkward look, and are very troublesome to keep in order, will be replaced by hedges, lawns, and shrubberies.

There is almost an instinctive dislike to forest trees, in many of our farmers, and they seldom consider them as an ornament. This feeling naturally arose out of the difficulty of clearing a piece of land from its original forests. In those who commenced their farms with this kind of labour, the feeling can hardly be eradicated,—and the habit of considering trees as a kind of nuisance, which ought to be destroyed, became general. It is not uncommon, therefore, to find a farmer cut down oaks that were near his house, and plant Lombardy poplars, as more ornamental. The increasing value of wood, and the example of better taste, will gradually prevent the repetition of similar absurdities. We have, however, to guard against too servile an imitation of your style of landscape gardening. The circumstances of the country are different, and the great beauties that grow out of contrast, must be produced in other ways. In Europe, where the country is universally cultivated, its unvaried aspect is fatiguing, and therefore the gardeners resort to thick plantations, and continued belts of trees;—but here, where there is already too much of forest

in the scenery, it should only be attempted to have a sufficient degree of shade for shelter,—and the view of cultivated grounds rather assisted than prevented ;—a discriminating taste will be governed by these circumstances.

You must not expect the park-like appearance of your own country ; you must not look for that succession of neat fields, ornamented grounds, picturesque plantations, and perfect tillage, with which wealth, taste, and agricultural skill, have almost covered the surface of England ;—but if you will look with candour on a young country, indulge cheerful sensations at its improving state, which will every where appear ; if you will not be disappointed at seeing no vestiges of remote antiquity, or any of those splendid establishments great wealth can produce ; if your mind can be satisfied with frequent combinations of the loveliest natural scenery, you will find a tour through many parts of this section of the Union, to be attended with great satisfaction.

LETTER XIV.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You make some inquiries respecting our colleges. I cannot give you accurate details about many of them ; but a general account of the oldest, and the one I am best acquainted with, may answer your purpose ; if you wish for more minute information, it will be readily obtained by addressing yourself to some of the gentlemen connected with it. Their plan of education is nearly the same, and the choice to be made, must depend on various considerations. Local convenience and economy are the general motives that send most of the students to all these colleges, in preference, to those at Cambridge and New-Haven. The students who come from a distance, are almost exclusively entered at one of these places, which, as they are the oldest, so they also possess the greatest number of professors, and the largest apparatus for study.

Our colleges were established without reference to any general system. Each state has at least one ;—in some, there are two or three. The Theological College at Andover, in Massachusetts, is

solely devoted to students in divinity, who are preparing for the Christian ministry ;—in the others, all the chief branches of learning are taught,—but only one of them, that at Cambridge, is strictly entitled to the name of University,—and though it has long borne the appellation, it is but recently that it could be really so considered. Yale College, at New-Haven, has derived a high reputation, from the distinguished abilities of some of its late and present instructors ; but neither its “ *personnel*” nor “ *materiel*” are sufficiently complete, to make it a university. It is, however, a very flourishing institution, and counts, among its students, youths from all parts of the United States. I am not qualified to go into a particular description of it ; but some of the remarks I shall offer you upon Harvard University, will apply to this, and all our other colleges.

One principle is common to all these establishments, and which will prevent any of them becoming truly a university, until it is changed : this is, the early age at which the students are admitted. Some of them are so young, that they are brought to the study of the moral and physical sciences, before their minds are matured enough, to derive any lasting advantage from it. This was owing, originally, to the circumstances of the country. Little more was intended, than to make these colleges a place where the learned languages might be acquired, and the students merely initiated in the study of the sciences. We were too young, too

poor, had too much rough labour to perform, were too much in a hurry to commence the active business of life, to be able to devote the time necessary to a thorough school and university education. We are preparing, gradually, to raise the scale of education, by prolonging its period. At Yale College, no student is received under fifteen, and the requisites for admission into Harvard University have been progressively increased, so that few now enter there under that age,—much the larger proportion is considerably above it.

The plan of education in these seminaries, is partly that of a school, partly that of an university. All the four classes attend recitations before their different tutors and professors, as in a school; and also attend the various courses of lectures of the professors, as in an university. The recitations are, however, most frequent for the freshmen and sophomores; the juniors and seniors attend to a greater number of lectures. This frequency of recitation is occasioned principally by the study of the languages. The system of education will be more complete, when the study of the languages, so far, at least, as it is a boyish study, shall be completed at school; and the student, when he comes to the university, shall pursue them only under the guidance of enlarged and philosophic criticism, to relish the beauties of the ancient poets, philosophers and historians, and form his taste and style on the models they present. The student may then be loosed from the trammels of constant recitation, which

may be compared to the fatigue of sailing in a convoy, where the dullest sailer regulates the speed of the whole fleet. If he comes perfectly fitted in the grammar, and in rendering the classics, and has got through the first stages of some other studies, which can hardly be done before sixteen, he will be of a suitable age to commence the higher branches of learning,—and following the various courses of lectures, and studying their subjects at the same time, he will advance faster than by the present system. Another advantage, also, will be gained ; —he will be allowed greater liberty of selecting the studies most congenial to his taste and destination in life. It is one evil attending plans of recitation, if too far extended, that students are forced to give their attention to studies, for which they have no degree of capacity, which can be of no use to them in their intended career, and for which, therefore, they naturally feel a great repugnance, and often oblige their instructors to wink at their deficiency. A mixture of the two modes of instruction, by recitation and by lectures, seems the best, because these recitations are a frequent check on the students, and operate, like an examination, to secure their attention. The question is on the due proportion of each method.

Harvard College was founded in 1638, and took its name from a clergyman, who gave a liberal sum to promote it. An establishment of this kind, at so early a period, is strongly characteristic of our ancestors. The motto of its arms, *Christo et Ec-*

clesiæ, points out their leading motive,—to raise up ministers of the gospel ;—it has fulfilled their intentions, by producing several hundred clergymen, many of whom were distinguished for their piety and their learning. The literature of this country, to say nothing of religion and morality, owes more to them than to any one or indeed, I may say, all the other professions together. At its commencement, it was under the direction of excellent scholars from the English universities,—and as a school for the languages, and the divinity of that day, it grew at once into eminence. It was always a favourite object with our enlightened citizens, to increase its prosperity ; and its growth was slowly, but steadily developing, as the country advanced. It continued in a flourishing state up to the period of the Revolution. As a classical school, it was not greatly inferior to those of England ; and the Latin and Greek poems there produced, on the accession of George the Third to the throne, may stand a competition with similar effusions from the English colleges, on the same occasion. The Revolution affected it very sensibly. In that period of embarrassment, danger and uncertainty, its progress was interrupted, and its interests suffered in the general distress of the country. The breed of thorough, classical scholars, disappeared,—and we are only now beginning to produce a new race, that can vie with those who existed fifty years ago. What is called learning, in the

narrow use of the term, received a fatal blow.—Those who had it, died without successors ;—the course of instruction was broken up, and as there were no longer profound masters, there could be only superficial scholars. The evils of such an interruption are slowly repaired ;—its effects were shown for more than a generation. The change has been great and animating within a few years ; the preparatory schools are greatly improved. The resources of all kinds, the talents, the administration of the university, stand much higher,—and if they should go on for the next, in the same ratio that they have for the last fifteen years, its most zealous friends will be amply gratified.

This institution is a perpetual corporation ; its management is vested in three bodies,—called the *Government*, the *Corporation*, and the *Board of Overseers*. The first is composed of the college officers ; president, professors, &c., who have the care of the immediate police of the university, the control of the students, the direction of their studies, rewards and punishments, &c. ; the second consists of six gentlemen, who have the power of filling their own vacancies ; they have the charge of the financial concerns of the institution, the choice of the president, professors, &c. ; the third is a numerous body, composed of the executive and senate of the state for the time being, certain clergymen of Boston or the neighbouring towns, and some other gentlemen who have been elected into the body,—

which consists of more than eighty members. They have a negative on the choice of all officers by the corporation; they form an honorary board, who have a right of revision, and may resort to it on extreme occasions; but they seldom take an active part in the concerns of the university.

The immediate college government is composed of the president, professors, tutors and librarian. The president is also a member of both the other boards: he is not engaged in any branch of instruction; when the person who fills the place is a clergyman, he occasionally preaches in the chapel, and says the morning and evening prayers. The professors are most of them married, and reside in their own houses; the tutors, regents, and proctors, have rooms in the college halls, where they can exercise a close watchfulness over the students. Several of the professors, who are no otherwise engaged in the instruction, than by delivering an annual course of lectures, reside in the capital, and as the distance is only three miles, they can attend to their duty without inconvenience. The president has a house, and about 3000 dollars a year;—a part of the professors have houses furnished them, and their salaries are from five hundred to two thousand dollars. The tutors have their rooms, and about 800 dollars a year. The professors take the following branches,—theology, mathematics, and natural philosophy; oriental languages, anatomy, and surgery; theory and practice of medicine, materia medica, chemistry, natural history, rhetoric, and oratory; logic, metaphysics, and ethics; Latin,

Greek, Greek literature, sacred literature, and jurisprudence ;—on the application of the sciences to the arts—natural theology, moral philosophy, and civil polity ; polite literature, and French and Spanish languages. In addition to these seventeen professors, which are here placed in the order in which the foundations were made, there are two or three tutors, librarian, French instructor, &c.

The professors of latin and greek, of logic and metaphysics, do not give lectures, but only hear recitations. Many of the other professors only give lectures ; some do both. The lectures connected with the medical department, are given at Cambridge, in a way to suit the purposes of those students who may wish to gain some general knowledge in those branches, without intending to devote themselves to the profession ;—in the course of anatomy, therefore, only some very exquisite wax, and other preparations, are made use of ;—the same professors give a course of lectures annually at the Medical College in Boston, expressly to physicians and medical students. Attendance upon some of the courses is confined to the two upper classes, who pay no particular fee to the professor, and other persons may attend them on paying a small fee. Taking all these lectures together, I doubt whether any establishment in the world can boast of more ability, on the whole, than will be found here. Among the recent professorships, some of them are filled by men who were first sent abroad, at the expense of the institution, to visit different

parts of Europe, to examine the various systems of teaching, and reside for a time at some of the principal universities, attend their courses of lectures, and bring home the knowledge of their forms of instruction, that we might derive some improvement from them all.

The revenues of the establishment, from all sources, amount to more than \$30,000 a year. The property, besides seven edifices of brick, and one of stone, which contain a chapel, dining halls, libraries, lecture rooms, philosophical and chemical instruments, anatomical preparations, and lodging rooms, consists in dwelling houses for the instructors, and other estates in different places. The library is a very valuable, though not very extensive one; it contains upwards of 25,000 volumes, some of them books of the most rare description. The philosophical apparatus is by far the most elegant in the United States, and in the branches of electricity and astronomy, contains many costly and beautiful instruments. The chemical laboratory is provided, with all that is requisite for experiments, after the most recent improvements. The medical library and anatomical preparations are extensive. The botanic garden was formed with great care and expense. There is also a small, but chosen collection of minerals, a few pictures, chiefly portraits, &c. &c. It must be recollected, that most of these things have been obtained very recently. The library itself is not more than sixty years old, since the ancient library was unfortunately burnt in 1760.

If the number of books could be doubled by a careful selection, laying aside the innumerable volumes that have been superseded by modern discoveries, this library would leave very few *desiderata* for the lovers of art or science.

The studies comprise the English, Latin, and Greek languages, and Hebrew or French ; one or both at the option of the student. History and the belles-lettres, and almost every branch of moral and physical science, are also taught to all the students. The instruction is all public, and there are no private tutors, except occasionally, some individual is allowed to give lessons in the languages, &c. The students go through an annual examination. There are two or three exhibitions, and the annual commencement, when public exercises are assigned to the best scholars, the principal purpose of which, is to keep up a spirit of emulation. Students may enter any of the classes if they can pass the requisite examination, but they almost all enter freshmen ; two or three perhaps in each class enter sophomores, and very rarely in a higher standing. It is considered more advantageous, to go through the regular period of four years. At the end of this time they receive a degree of Bachelor of Arts, and three years afterwards, as a matter of course, if they apply for it, a degree of Master. The number of students is commonly about 250. The resident graduates have increased of late years, and are now 50 or 60. The expense of an education at this seminary, for lodging and instruction.

is about one thousand dollars for the whole term of four years. The private expenses will be according to the discretion of the parent or guardian. There are several little aids given to poor scholars, to assist them in their necessary disbursements.

There are some improvements to be made, which will tend to raise the character, and enlarge the utility of this establishment. One of these is, to multiply the number of resident graduates. This will enlarge the society, and excite sympathy and emulation among young men whose minds are matured, and who can attend the lectures and pursue the particular studies they prefer, without the restrictions necessarily imposed on under graduates. The standard of education will become higher, if the three years between the two degrees are devoted to a course of liberal study, to accomplishing the mind with general knowledge, before it is exclusively given up to one particular profession. The students in divinity and law, as well as all young men whose fortune prevents the necessity of their choosing a profession, would be greatly benefited by a studious residence here of two or three years. The students in medicine are more desirous of being in a large town, as their studies are so closely connected with practice. The greatest number of resident graduates at present are divinity students;—the law school is of recent foundation; but it will add very much to the character of young men, if they pass two or three years at Cambridge in the study of polite literature, philoso-

phy, and the elementary parts of law, before they plunge into the narrow details of an attorney's practice.

Another improvement would be, a strict examination of the students, before receiving their degrees and making honorary distinctions among them, according to their merits, as is done in the English universities. These distinctions should be designated in the catalogue. As it is, the dull and the negligent stand on the same line with the gifted and the studious. This would stimulate all emulous minds to strive for this permanent mark of distinction. The officers of college now very justly complain, that in the last quarter of the senior year the student is more listless, and profits less, than in any other part of his career. This measure would certainly change it, into the most studious and attentive in the whole period of a college life.

A branch of instruction, which has been shamefully neglected, (the word, I own, is a harsh one,) has been oratory,—or rather, elocution. Every person who has attended a college exhibition, would see, with disgust, more than half the exhibitors speak their parts in such a slovenly, awkward manner, as would not have been tolerated in a village school. Mistaken notions are very prevalent on this subject, and because some of the ablest writers we possess, have the worst possible delivery, it is thought to be of no consequence. But how much greater, how much more effective, would the power of these speakers be, if, to solid mental ac-

quirements and a happy style, they joined a graceful and impressive delivery. But it is said, that a theatrical flourish and display of gesture and elocution, would not be tolerated in the senate chamber, the pulpit, or the bar.—Certainly they would not. A person does not learn to dance, to stand always in the first or second position, or to move about in a room in the step of a minuet;—but dancing, and the mechanical part of oratory, give a man the command of his powers,—make his movements supple and easy;—and dancing and declaiming are useful exercises, chiefly because they enable him who has practised them, to walk and speak with facility. In this country, of all others, where the influence of oratory is so important and so universal, it is surprising, such a pernicious neglect of it should be found. There is a professorship of rhetoric and oratory,—but its principal duties are the instruction in the former, in the formation of style and the theory of speaking. Elocution must be taught by a master for that particular purpose;—actors are generally the best. In France and England there are the persons by whom instruction is given to those, who wish to accomplish themselves in the art of speaking and reading. I should have felt more reluctance in touching upon this subject, if a change was not about taking place. The art of speaking has been lately made a public exercise;—honours are awarded to those who excel, and a spirit of competition is created, that will ameliorate the manner of future orators.

There is another regulation to be introduced, which some consider trifling, perhaps without sufficient reflection. There is no country, which has so utterly discarded all the influence that can be derived from dress, as the United States. We have gone much beyond the Quakers,—for their plainness, unvarying fashion, and limited choice of colours, constitute a species of uniform, and keep up a kind of starch pretension, very preservative in its tendency. But we have renounced all distinctions in dress;—the bushy wigs, the solemn and the gorgeous robes, of other nations and of other times, and a clergyman, a deacon, or a layman; a judge, an attorney, or a witness; have, in most cases, no distinction of apparel. This has, to a certain extent, good consequences,—though most of the governments in the world would think, and probably think right, that they could not exist under such a disregard of externals. Still, in some cases, we find it necessary to adhere to old customs, and the lessons of experience. The first step in military organization, is a uniform; both discipline and the pride of situation are found to be essentially promoted by it. In most parts of Europe, a uniform is found highly useful in all schools and colleges;—it would be attended with good effects, if we were to return to it. I say return, because the giving it up was an innovation. The ancient academic dress, the black gown and square cap, were the original costume of the university. This simple, graceful dress, ought to be resumed;—and, as in the English schools and

colleges, every instructor and student should be obliged to wear them at all times, except when going out of the town. This would give a uniformity and ennobling appearance, that could not fail of some moral influence; it would continually remind all the wearers of their situation, and would at least do away the present, promiscuous, street-like appearance among the students; where some have the aspect of ridiculous dandies, and others of sorry apprentices. With the resumption of this ancient dress, I would introduce, (and thus would facilitate it) greater general neatness, and particularly in the aspect of the buildings and courts. It is one of the greatest charms of England, that all the public institutions, colleges, barracks, &c. are kept with such exquisite order, cleanliness, and simple ornament. Something has been done of late, but much remains to be done. The exterior of most of the buildings has a shabby look;—they should be painted,—the lawns and paths about the edifices should be kept neatly trimmed and swept. This would have its effect on the tenants, and if they could be fixed in a taste for cleanliness and neatness in the objects that surround them, to say nothing for their own persons; the acquisition would not be the less useful, that they could carry back and propagate it, by their example, over different parts of the country. I am aware that these topics may appear trivial to some;—men who are deeply incrustated with collegiate learning, are apt to consider such things trifles; they serve, however, to

decorate and give effect to solid things. I think in this, as in several other places, the counsel which Plato gave to Xenocrates, when he advised him *to sacrifice to the Graces*, might be usefully inculcated.

With regard to discipline, the grand difficulty of our country in civil, military and collegiate life, this university has not been without its trials; yet these have been less violent, and not more frequent, than have happened in other seminaries of the Union. The government generally is very lenient, but very firm; if the courser chooses to take the bit between his teeth, and run aside, there is no curb to prevent him. They are governed principally by their good feelings,—not merely by the loss of college honours and advantages, but by their regard for their friends. If a student perseveres in a wrong course, the parent is written to, and he is made to conform, by the influence of parental authority. Rebellions occasionally happen, and summary punishments are inflicted, in the shape of fines, temporary banishment, or total expulsion. The youth have all their feathers erect on these occasions, and strut and crow for an hour or two; in the mean time the public smile,—the government eliminate two or three of the most turbulent, and order is restored. These diminutive events are what the empress of Russia, speaking of the troubles at Geneva, called “a storm in a wine-glass.” On the whole, it is highly honourable to the character of our youth;—it proves their ingenuousness,

and the good order of their homes, to find how well they behave under the slight restrictions imposed upon them. When some persons lament that the system of discipline is not more rigid and severe, they do not sufficiently reflect on the nature of the government under which we live ; a state of freedom that presumes so much on the good conduct of the citizen. Young men are prepared for such a form of society, by the absence of all coarse restraint ; they are kept to their duty by principles of affection and propriety ;—they acquire the habit of self-government, and voluntary moderation. If they were restrained by high walls and grated windows, by vigilant watching, and underwent severe penances and personal punishments ; they would be let out from such a place of education, very unprepared for the state of society in which they are to act.

There is another point, on which some prejudice and misapprehension exist in the minds of the public. The religious doctrines that are taught in the theological department, have excited ill-will near home, and alarm at a distance, in some persons who have a bigoted hatred of every thing that does not accord with their creed. But little danger is to be apprehended for the general student on this account. He is not called upon to be a very great proficient in theology ; and the college government preach and practise toleration. The sermons in the University Chapel, are a series of lectures on the doctrines of Christianity. But there

is an Episcopal church, where the students are allowed to go, if their parents should prefer it. Perhaps, for theological students, who are intended for the orthodox career, the experiment of attending these lectures might be dangerous, unless their principles and their conviction were very clear and steady ; if they were so, even students of this kind might derive great benefit from some of the very able lectures on theology and sacred criticism, which they would have an opportunity of hearing.

This institution, as has been already remarked, was originally founded for religious purposes ; and clergymen have always had a chief share in its management. For a long period it continued a nursery of Calvinistic teachers. When this faith, which for a series of years had been gradually relenting, at length lost its hold altogether, in the minds of the congregational clergy in this vicinity ; it was a matter of course, that the University which was so much under their government, should come under the influence of what are called liberal opinions. The Calvinists repaired this defection at once, with their accustomed energy and zeal ; and established a theological college at Andover, and obtained twice as many students for their youthful establishment, as this university possessed in the theological department, with all its learning and other advantages.

The government of the university expressly protest against being considered as exclusively under the dominion of any sect. The object of the theo-

logical department, is to give general instruction in the doctrines of religion and of the truth and importance of Christianity, but not in connexion with any particular creed, though the general tendency is undoubtedly Unitarian. They do not pretend to act as propagandists, nor can they with any great effect ; since no two of these gentlemen agree in all points of belief : there is no written creed, no platform established ; the progress towards Unitarianism has been gradual ; it has been openly avowed but by very few, till lately. There probably never can be any fixed system, when once the artificial, yet settled ground of orthodoxy, is abandoned ; people who commit themselves to the stream, are borne about by various currents and eddies of opinion, and it is very uncertain where they will land at last. They will be necessarily scattered. The liberal school is in its very nature innovating and fluctuating, and the question about believing too much or too little will never be decided. Such a school of divinity can never have a very wide spread ; but it will doubtless be productive of great learning and ingenuity, and its liberality and courage will counteract the establishment of the most odious of all tyranny, the domination of a religious sect.

The government is well aware, that it must act in a Catholic spirit, to promote the interests committed to them. Many of the contributors to its funds are Episcopalians, or others of the orthodox classes. The state, which has been a liberal patron, is filled with different sects, who look to this semi-

nary as a noble school for general learning, and not as devoted to the interests of any sect or party. The proportion of young men who resort to it for an education, who are destined for other professions than theology, has been steadily growing larger; and it is as a school, where every branch of literature and science will be cultivated and taught; in fine, as an university, that the public regard it, and by these considerations, the views of those who govern it are and must be directed.

Its emancipation from the control of a proselyting sect, is certainly a subject of congratulation. Else, its wide capacity would be narrowed to the purposes of a religious party; it would then be a bed where no man could repose, before his opinions were drawn out, or cut down, till they fitted. A professor could not then be chosen without a first regard to his religious creed, and a secondary one, to his talents. The question would be, in such seminaries, not whether he was a first rate scholar, a man of profound science; but whether he was a Trinitarian or a Unitarian; whether he believed in the infallibility of the Pope, or Calvin. Fortunately, this university stands on broader ground; it will possess always an able school of theological learning and biblical criticism; and will, without doubt, continue to furnish a succession of learned and pious clergymen; but its chief reputation will arise from its being a distinguished, fruitful repository of all good learning.

LETTER XV.

THE TOWN OF BOSTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU asked me to give you a description of Boston and of its inhabitants ; a place which you have never yet visited, though it is but little more than eight hundred miles from your own residence, and people of both sexes, and of all ages, come a much greater distance every summer, to leave their cards. A few hundred miles, which would carry a traveller out of the limits of some empires, can hardly be remarked on the extensive map of our country ; which, if colossal size were the only measure of greatness, would find few competitors to look it in the face, even by standing tiptoe,—but as it is, we too often find it productive of inconvenience, and when it separates friends so far, we wish its limits were more restricted ;—however, as it is daily enlarging, not, I trust, “like the circle in the water,” we may as well cease our regrets on this point. Perhaps my description may induce you to come, though I might be led into great exaggerations, if I thought so ; but as I fear you will never gratify the friends who would give you such a cordial wel-

come, I shall try to make out a plain matter of fact account. I am willing, however, to caution you against my partiality, and that this sketch should be received, as coming from a native Cockney.

Boston is situated at the bottom of Massachusetts bay, on a capacious and excellent harbour, distant from the sea about ten miles, from whose waves it is sheltered by a groupe of islands, of various sizes and appearance. Three small rivers, the Charles, Mystic, and Neponset, navigable for only five or six miles, empty into these waters, and the first washes the towns on the north and west. The town itself, and two of its suburbs, Charlestown and South Boston, stand on three peninsulas, which form the western, northern, and southern sides of the inner harbour. The neck of each of these peninsulas is low and narrow, over which the tide formerly flowed. Each of these districts, which collectively contain less than three thousand acres, is variegated in its surface with gentle slopes and hills of moderate height. The surrounding country exhibits a variegated appearance; smooth meadows, gently swelling hills, and small valleys, presenting undulating lines of the most pleasing variety, covered with villages, country seats, farm-houses, orchards, groves, and a cultivation, that gives a smiling aspect to the whole landscape.

There are no sublime features in this scenery, except the view of the ocean, which is obtained from almost every rising ground; but all the traits of beauty are profusely scattered. There are no

majestic mountains, no fearful precipices ; the highest land, called the Blue Hills, about eight miles south from the town, rises between seven and eight hundred feet. A striking circumstance in the topography of this district, is the endless number and variety of pleasing views it offers. The tide flows around these islands, peninsulas, and points of land, forming so many little straits and coves, and running up these small rivers and creeks, in such a serpentine course, that the land and water are every where blended together : in addition, there are several fine brooks, and many beautiful ponds of fresh water, which makes it almost impossible to find a view, that is not embellished by some sheet of water. The town itself, which is visible from the neighbouring eminences for many miles in every direction, comes in to give richness to the scene. The surface on which it is built is so irregular ; there are so many steeples and turrets ; the varied colour of its dwellings reflected and contrasted by the smooth surface of the water, that almost encircles it ; the sort of coquettish negligence with which it seems flung over its hills for display ; all combine to make its exterior more imposing and picturesque than any other city in the Union, though it is but the fourth in magnitude. To point out all the beautiful views would be in vain ; where every little eminence you ascend, and almost every turn you take, offers a new picture.

Several country seats are so placed, as to command delightful prospects. It would form a long

list to enumerate them all ; but I will answer for it, that any of your friends who will bring letters from you, will find a ready access to them. I will only mention three views which are on the highway, and are very different, and all possessing, in a very high degree, grandeur, and beauty. The first is on a hill, about six miles from town, over which the Concord turnpike passes ; the next is on Milton-hill, about the same distance ; and the third is on a hill in Malden, over which the Newbury turnpike passes, about a mile from the bridge. A great deal of the effect in landscape, as well as in paintings, depends on the manner in which the light is thrown ; in these three that I have mentioned, the most favourable moments for seeing them are an hour or two before sunset. You may conclude, that these environs must possess remarkable beauty, when it has been observed, by more than one intelligent foreigner, whose opinions must be free from local partiality, that, Naples excepted, there is no spot in Europe can equal it.

Nor does this scenery depend on its natural beauties alone, to give pleasure. There are many delightful places in our country, that have no other charm but their own loveliness to attract the spectator ; and being wholly unconnected with any historical events, create no associations that occupy the mind. But it is far otherwise here. Independently of many events in early history, the American Revolution has immortalized the spot. Here first began, in words and writing, resistance to oppression, and here that resistance was

first sealed in blood. Every hill, every point of land around the town, is still crowned with the first breast-works of the Revolution. Lexington and Bunker-hill are parts of the landscape. It is the classic ground of American patriotism and valour, and the interest it excites, must increase with all succeeding ages.

On entering the town, the traveller does not find its interior equal to the expectations he will have entertained from its appearance at a distance. It is very irregular, many of the streets are narrow and winding. It has more the aspect of an European town, than any other city in America. The buildings are, many of them, of wood, but some of these are neat and even elegant, from being neatly painted, and from their style of architecture. Buildings of this material, more than ten feet high, have been prohibited by law for some years; of course their number is decreasing by fires and decay. This salutary law was not passed, till the town had suffered repeatedly from extensive conflagrations. The greatest number of buildings are now of brick. Of late years it has become the practice to build with stone, and there are several public and private edifices of this material. The stone employed is a fine light-coloured granite, which is found at Chelmsford, on the Middlesex canal, about twenty miles distant. Many of the houses have gardens attached to them, and a small piece of grass in front, with an open railing. This relieves the narrowness of the streets; and the number of trees

break up the dull masses of brick very agreeably. Some of the modern streets are straight and sufficiently spacious. There are many large and elegant houses scattered in different parts. As the streets are not on a flat plain, but run over the hills, they present some picturesque views. The commercial part of the town has a better appearance, and is more convenient than in any of our cities: there are three noble wharves parallel to each other, with rows of warehouses their whole length, having spacious open docks for the vessels to unload, with every accommodation. Two of these wharves, all their buildings, and some adjoining streets, were produced by one individual,* who has done more to improve the town, than any other fifty men it ever possessed.

The town is, generally speaking, very clean, and three or four of the streets may be called beautiful. Forty years ago it had but one entrance; since then, four bridges, from five to eight hundred yards in length, have been constructed, and a solid causeway, of more than a mile and a half, is now making, which will open a noble approach to the finest part of the town. Its handsomest feature is the common, and the mall which surrounds it.—This is a charming piece of ground nearly a mile in circumference; it has fine houses, two churches, and the state-house, on four of its sides, and on the fifth, an extensive bay of Charles' River, bounded by an amphitheatre

* Uriah Cotting, Esq. since deceased.

of hills, forming an exquisite prospect. On the side of the town next the harbour there is an eminence, called Fort-hill, on which there is a pretty circular walk, commanding a view of the harbour, the shipping, and the islands. But the great ornament and boast of the town, is the common before mentioned ; this is superior to any other walk in the United States, and there are few in any part of the world, for which less has been done by art, or more by nature.

The site on which Boston was built, was called, by the Indians, Shawmut. It was first called, by the whites, Tremont, or Trimount, from the predominance of three conspicuous hills ; afterwards called Boston, out of compliment to a clergyman much beloved, who came over from Boston in England. The founder of Boston was Mr. Johnstone, a Lincolnshire gentleman, who resided with his wife, the Lady Arabella, daughter of the Earl of Lincoln, somewhere in the street now called Tremont-Street, and was the first person buried in the chapel burying-ground. Our antiquities are merely degrees of infancy compared with the cities of Europe ; while in respect to some of the towns that sprung up last year, or last week, in various parts of the Union, they claim a most venerable seniority. Owing to the early habit of constructing with wood, there are a few buildings more than a century old, and not many even of that age. The oldest is a dwelling house in Tremont-street, built by the celebrated Sir Henry Vane, about 150 years since,

and this is probably the most ancient dwelling in the United States; it has been modernized, but is still a substantial, handsome house.

From its central position, in regard to an extensive sea-coast, on which the first settlements were made, Boston soon grew to be a place of some note, and gradually became the largest town in all the colonies; and it continued to be so nearly to the period of the Revolution. It was the centre of the fisheries and of ship-building, the main sources of its prosperity, up to the epoch of our present government. The lucrative commerce which has been carried on for the last thirty years, has produced an immense accession of wealth to the town, as well as the neighbouring country. Of its former sources of wealth, the building of vessels and the fisheries, the first is diminished really, and the latter relatively. Its foreign commerce, and the mart it has become for home manufactures, are now the chief sources of its wealth.

The population was, for a long time, the highest of any town on the continent:—New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, now greatly surpass it. But in the returns of the population, there are some circumstances that should be borne in mind, to form a just estimate of the relative resources of these places. Boston is limited to a very narrow territory; its proper suburbs belong to other places. It has numerous towns in its vicinity, many of them older than itself, and all of which have had a steady, gradual increase. The other cities incorpo-

rate a large territory, and there are few towns, or even villages, in their vicinity. Boston contains only 43,000 people; New-York and Philadelphia three times that number; but if the population within a square of thirty miles, including Boston, be counted, all of which has its centre of business in that place, and with which a very active daily intercourse is kept up, it would probably be nearly equal to that of any similar extent in the United States.

Its importance, however, was only in part owing to its trade, or the amount of its population. It was the character of that population from the beginning which excited the respect of its neighbours, and made it the capital of opinion, as well as commerce, to all New-England. The early establishment of Harvard College; the general diffusion of education; the high religious feeling which pervaded the community, and the learned clergymen who made this place the focus of that feeling; the stern spirit of independence; the unrelenting watchfulness over their political rights; the great ability and rigid virtue of the early magistrates; the elevation of mind, which made them esteem all other considerations subordinate to the maintenance of their religious freedom and their political rights, were among the circumstances, which contributed essentially to the respectability of this capital.

This kind of character, followed by the influence it would naturally command, was steadily maintained, with some diminution of austerity, perhaps,

in religion, in the last generation ; but the whole amount was not lessened, for an additional portion of severe vigilance was given to politics. The consequences were shown in the period between 1760 and 1776. When the coercive scheme of finance, that produced our emancipation, was attempted to be put into execution, its first approaches, its most indirect and concealed attempts, were here first met and unmasked. A discussion has arisen in the United States about who first proposed the Revolution ;—this is a mere question of curiosity, the solution of which is almost as easy as to tell which portion of water, in an impetuous stream, came out of a particular fountain. The current of public opinion arose imperceptibly,—it increased gradually,—was swollen by a thousand rivulets, and fed at once from sources beneath, and with drops from heaven. Boston was first called upon to act and suffer ;—the former was performed with energy,—the latter with firmness. The British ministry, though they had not contemplated the end of their measures with accuracy, knew where to begin. They laid their whole weight of power on this devoted town, in the first instance. Its skilful and heroic resistance, from the first insinuation of an arbitrary principle in a governor's speech, to the defiance and defeat of naval and military forces, excited the sympathy ; and gave time for the whole country to prepare for the explosion of a general contest. Their conduct excited the attention of the world at the time so much, that Boston

only was talked of, as if the whole effort at resistance was made by them;—and Americans were then, in France, often called *Bostonians*, the term by which they are designated in Canada to this day.*

It is natural that the citizens of a town, whose hall for public meetings has been called “the cradle of the Revolution,” whose name is associated with so many great events, and so honourably enrolled in history, should feel a pride in belonging to it. This is cherished by the nature of their institutions, which are highly remarkable. This town (for it is not a city) is, perhaps, the most perfect, and certainly the best regulated democracy, that ever existed. There is something so imposing in the immortal fame of Athens, that the very name makes every thing modern shrink from comparison; but since the days of that glorious city, I know of none that has approached so near in some points, distant as it may still be from that illustrious model. The cities of Italy, in the middle ages, the Hanse towns, Geneva, and others, were called republics;—but they have been under the government

* A game of cards was invented at Versailles, and called in honour of the town, *Boston*; the points of the game are allusive,—*great independence, little independence, great misery, little misery, &c.* It was composed partly of whist, and partly of quadrille, though partaking most of the former. As it is almost unknown in this country, it may be of use to persons who amuse themselves in this way to know, that this is the most interesting game that is played. It is still partially in use in France, but in every circle in the north of Europe, from Amsterdam to St. Petersburg, *Boston* is now almost the exclusive game.—A work has been recently published in France, called *Boston de Flore*, its object is to illustrate botaury by a kind of cards.

of an aristocracy, or in a state of anarchy. Boston has never, like these, possessed sovereign power; but it has essentially contributed to the establishment of the noblest sovereignty in the world, and has generally possessed a wider influence, than these puny states. It cannot yet boast of the magnificence of Athens, or even of some of these modern cities,—it is not yet two centuries old, and in a country no older than itself—but if its citizens do not become recreant,—if its future manhood should not belie the promises of youth,—when time shall have swept over it as many ages, as it has over the Acropolis, the recollections it will leave will not be inferior. Let me return, however, from these excursions into the past and the future, to consider only the present.

This place now contains a population of 43,000. It is, and always has been, a simple, pure, unmixed democracy, but without any sovereign power, forming part of the state of which it is the capital. All its officers are annually chosen, and all its concerns, financial as well as others, are acted upon by the whole people, in public town-meeting. Every inhabitant has a right to vote and speak on all subjects,—and this right is exercised by individuals of every class. The choice of officers, and other town affairs, takes place on certain fixed days, every year. But public town meetings are held, from time to time, on various subjects of general concern; and the selectmen, who are charged with the government of the town, must call one whenever a requisition for the

purpose is signed by a certain number of citizens. These selectmen answer to a court of aldermen, but there is no officer corresponding to a mayor. These municipal officers, excepting the chairman, who has a small salary, have no pay, no particular costume, and no guards of any kind, except, on public meetings, when one or two constables are in attendance, and serve as messengers, &c.

These public assemblies are called for various purposes,—frequently for political ones, in times of agitation, when public measures are discussed, and resolutions passed, according to the will of the majority. Public notice is given some days previously,—the selectmen are obliged to be in attendance, but the person who is to preside over the meetings is taken from among the citizens; any person has a right to nominate, and the choice is immediately decided by a hand vote. The person chosen takes the chair, is called a moderator, and has no other visible protection for his authority, than what the good sense of the citizens always accords to his discretion and impartiality.* The parliamentary form of addressing the chair, and not the body of the assembly, is adhered to, and this is a great restraint on the passious, both of the speaker and the hearers. The speaking is not confined to professional men, or to the richer classes, but people in every walk of life may, and do, take a part. A sturdy demagogue will sometimes obstinately

* Persons exhibiting riotous conduct are amenable to the law.

hold his way in these debates, to the annoyance or the amusement of the meeting, but generally they are men of ability who attempt to harangue. Such assemblies must furnish a good school for popular oratory, and excellent speakers have been, from time to time, produced by them. The most perfect order reigns in these primary assemblies;—it is rare, indeed, that any indecorum, either of word or gesture, is offered, and if it should happen, is sure to meet with general reprobation. I have been present at these meetings, when from three to four thousand people were assembled, among whom a strong personal excitement existed in regard to the question at issue; and although the assembly was nearly equally divided, yet the subject was discussed with less violence, and more quiet in the audience, than I have seen in many debates in the British House of Commons. Habit, self-respect, from the consciousness of freedom, and the degree of general information that prevails among the people, combine to produce this remarkable order and good conduct, which are strongly shown on the days of election. The annual election of the governor of the state is, generally, a close struggle, when parties run high, which they have done for the last thirty years. Every kind of effort, in speaking and writing, is made use of for some weeks before, to rouse the electors in favour of their respective candidates. The whole mass sometimes take a lively interest in the event, and yet, on the day of election, near six thousand ballots are given

in Faneuil Hall, between the hours of nine and three o'clock;—every individual, as he hands in his vote to the selectmen, is checked by a committee, composed of the opposite parties;—no instance has been known of the slightest hustling, disorder, or riot of any kind,—and the ordinary business of the citizens is uninterrupted. A stranger, who wants to understand our character, should attend some of these assemblies.

Among the public institutions, there are two which deserve particular notice. The first is a military company, which was incorporated in the commencement of the colony, to form a school for officers; but religious feelings were strongly united with military ones, in its establishment. It now contains between one and two hundred members, who are, or have been, almost every one of them, officers, either in the regular service or in the militia;—of course, among the privates, are generals, colonels, &c. The original intention was, that this should be a school for military discipline and instruction,—and that they should keep in mind their duty to religion, so as to form a corps of Christian soldiers. For this purpose, their anniversary is publicly celebrated,—the governor, and other persons in civil authority, attending it, and going in procession to church, where an appropriate sermon is preached to them, on the joint duties of the Christian and the soldier. After this annual sermon they have a dinner in Faneuil Hall, to which a large number of guests are invited;—and

in the afternoon, the company escort the governor to the Common, where he receives the insignia of the officers for the past year, and confers them on those who have been elected to their places. A short speech is made on giving and receiving these commissions. This company is now on a respectable footing, but perhaps more might be made of it. Their anniversary, however, affords one of the prettiest fêtes we have. It is called the Artillery Election, and takes place in the month of June, and on this occasion, eight or ten thousand people are collected, to see the ceremonies in the Common. In this, as in many other cases, the spectators themselves afford the most pleasing spectacle.

The annual visitation of the schools is another ceremony that is worthy of notice. The care of the public schools is given to a few gentlemen, annually elected, who are called the school committee ;—they, with the selectmen, have the charge of all that relates to public instruction. There is a yearly visitation of all these schools by the school committee and selectmen, accompanied by the clergy, some of the principal citizens, strangers of distinction, &c. who are invited on this occasion. After the examination is gone through, all the boys who have distinguished themselves in the different schools, with their masters, join the procession, and the whole company partake of a handsome dinner in Faneuil Hall. The appearance of this company is peculiar ;—these children, their countenances glowing with the distinction they

have acquired, are here seated at a public feast, with the most venerable and dignified citizens of the town. They are here introduced, for the first time, into the hall, where their fathers maintained the rights of their country, and which they may hereafter be called upon to support. After the cloth is removed, the children place themselves as they please, and are scattered about the hall for some time in various groupes ; while the company are listening to songs, and drinking toasts, enjoying, with a moderate hilarity, a festival, in which all the finest feelings of the parent and the citizen are deeply interested. After a while the masters assemble them, a march is played, they make the tour of the Hall in regular files ; the company all rise and stand till they leave the room when a burst of applause breaks out, which vibrates on the ears and hearts of the boys as they depart. This mixture of infancy and age, this public honour paid to education, this stimulating reward to childish merit, the sparkling pleasure of the young, and the mild satisfaction of the aged,—the introduction of these boys into the public forum, where they are hereafter to discharge their duty as citizens, presents, altogether, one of the most pleasing, and certainly the most republican festival, I ever witnessed.

The town is not deficient in the means of amusement. Those of a quiet, intellectual kind, are the most numerous. Libraries and reading-rooms are of this description. There are one or two of the latter near the Exchange, where all the principal newspapers of the continent are filed, and where all

commercial intelligence is regularly entered. There are book-stores, well supplied with a miscellaneous collection, and places of call for literary loungers. There are several public libraries, which, though not extensive, are the foundations that may support goodly superstructures; each of the professions, law, medicine, and divinity, have one. But the chief establishment is the Athenaeum. This is already a considerable institution, and wants little now, except a suitable building, to develop its utility. It has a library of about 12,000 volumes, many of them elegant and valuable books; these are not allowed to be taken away, but the room is always open for their perusal. An apartment below contains the chief periodical works of the United States and of Great Britain; the principal newspapers of both countries, and most of the pamphlets and new books of our own country. Occasionally there are some German and French journals, but they are not received regularly.—In the same rooms are very complete series of all the American periodical works, and also of some French and English journals, from their first establishment. A good building, and a small increase of funds for the purchase of new publications, and the principal periodical works of the continent of Europe, would make it very perfect. Persons of a literary taste have, from time to time, an opportunity of hearing public lectures. There are also several literary clubs, where the chief pleasure is conversation, though some written dissertation is

the duty of each member in turn : a stranger, with suitable introduction, may easily have access to all these places.

There is a theatre open three times a week, from October to May, in which the performances, taken generally, are equal, if not superior, to the best English provincial theatres. There is a circus for equestrian performances, singing, &c.—We have public balls, and public concerts, at intervals ; they were formerly kept up regularly, but as the society grew larger, they were attended with inconveniences. You may recollect an impromptu of a celebrated Scotch wit, Harry Erskine, to the Dutchess of Gordon, who told him, “ that she would not go “ to the races ; she thought they would be dull, and “ there would be nothing worth seeing :

“ Not go,—that is, as if the sun should say,

“ It’s a cold cloudy morn ; I will not rise to-day.”

Well, so it was here ; those who formed the sunshine of these parties shrunk back, and the clouds would not assemble, unless they were illuminated. We now have these public parties only on particular occasions ; but the private ones are the more numerous in consequence.

A stranger who comes properly introduced, (and the error here is on the side of facility, rather than strictness,) may pass his time very pleasantly. He must not look, however, for the licentious pleasures of great capitals ; our resources in this way are fortunately inferior, to what may be found in many cities of the same size. But if he has a robust con-

stitution, and can bear the good dinners and excellent wines that will be offered him ; if he has a taste for easy, social intercourse, great simplicity of manners, to the almost entire exclusion of what is mere etiquette ; if he is fond of cards, and can be satisfied with a party at whist without high play ; if he has a taste for literary or scientific discussion ; in short, if he is fond of rational and moderate enjoyments, and a pervading domestic tone of life, he may certainly be gratified.

Our population is very little mixed ; it is native of the spot, or transferred from various parts of the eastern states, whose origin was similar. It has grown so gradually, that the inhabitants are more known to each other ; and aided by the peculiar form of government, their mutual dependence is more intimately felt, than in most towns. This prevents the wealthy from being arrogant, and the poor from being turbulent. There is hardly any such thing as mere populace in the town. It is not a manufacturing town, and is therefore without the kinds of crowds that such towns exhibit. It is, however, a great depot for manufactures, produced in its vicinity, and the sale of these, and an extensive foreign and domestic trade, furnish the chief employment to the inhabitants. It is an orderly, quiet place, which effect is produced more by the character of the people, than by the vigour of the police, of which there is very little. There are two or three festival days in the course of the year, when there are military parades, and a great con-

course of people are collected ; yet there is no riot, no disorder ; even drunkenness is rarely seen, and the streets are as quiet on the evening of such a day, as on any other. A very great improvement has taken place in these respects, within the period of the present generation.

There is a great deal of wealth in this community ; most of it is employed in commerce, but much of it is in the hands of people who do not engage very actively in trade ; though as bankers, insurers, or adventurers in distant voyages, they take some share in business, merely as an occupation, and to have an excuse for going to the Exchange, that they may talk over the various news of the day. There are some individuals who have colossal fortunes ; there are many who have liberal ones ; and a still greater number, who obtain, from different pursuits, an easy, moderate competence. There is very little ostentation, and no extravagant display of luxury. The richest men are not those who spend the most ; their scale of expense does not exceed what men of moderate fortune may reach, by whom indeed they are often surpassed. It often happens, in every part of the world, that the owners of great wealth seem to have undergone some mental process, by which they become as secure keepers of it, as the guards of the Seraglio of what is intrusted to them. Here, however these moderate habits may have a fortunate tendency ; they keep down luxury, and a spirit of rivalry in expense,

that would be followed with the most deleterious consequences, both to individuals and to society.

There is a large number of persons who have had a liberal education; and who, amidst all the occupation of professional or commercial business, still retain some tincture of it. Every man enrolls himself with some particular class, because there are none who are willing to be put down with the hog, described by Dr. Franklin's negro,—*he no work—he eat—he drink—he sleep—he walk about—he lib like a gentleman*. There are many young men possessed of competence, who go into a counting-house, or to some professional study, even without engaging actively in the profession they have acquired. The greatest number of these study the law, and are admitted to the bar, but never practise to any extent. They correspond in some respects to the class of men which existed in France, before the Revolution, called *Abbés*; and bear the same proportion to an active lawyer, that an abbé did to a priest. It is, however, in the one case as the other, a condition: they are in the way of preferment, amusing their minds, in the mean time, with literature or other pursuits.

The people of this town are great travellers; it would be difficult to find a society of half a dozen, of the class who change their linen every day, in which some, if not most of the party, have not visited Europe. Commercial pursuits have led a great many; almost every body has been to England. The natural desire, in liberal and intelli-

gent minds, of seeing Europe, of which, from their infancy, they have heard so much, inspires a restless, enlightened curiosity, to visit regions so famous. Nor is this confined to men alone, but both sexes have enjoyed the advantage of travelling in an unusual degree. You might find a large circle of both sexes, who have not only seen London and Paris, but Rome and Naples. Of late years, some of our young men have travelled with the most liberal views, and under the greatest advantages, and we have a small number of these who have not stopped with Italy, but have been on a classic pilgrimage to Greece. If no other good is produced, the subjects of conversation in society, are thus rendered more amusing and instructive.

One result of so much travelling, has been to diffuse a taste for the arts. The encouragement they receive is not indeed splendid, but it is progressive. We have produced some artists of eminence, and for several years have had one or two residing here constantly. There are some small collections of pictures belonging to individuals, which are at least equal to the average of collections. There is too, a right feeling on this score; we rather seek to reward a living artist, than to give an extravagant price for old pictures. Most of our gentlemen feel a pride in having some works of our own artists hanging in their parlours; every new performance aids in the diffusion of refinement. In the other arts, we have hardly any thing to show. In sculpture, we have nothing but here

and there a bust. This art will be awakened among us, when we think we are rich enough to erect monuments or cenotaphs, to departed greatness. For music, we have more fondness than skill; our musicians and actors are all foreigners; our young men seldom play on any instrument, and though no one would wish to see them a race of fiddlers, yet the practice of music would fill up many hours innocently, that are now spent in vicious or stupifying indolence. Sacred music, from the universal habit of attending public worship, is a good deal cultivated, but too generally in a bad taste; there are two or three musical societies, who have regular meetings for vocal and instrumental music. As every man now-a-days wears a watch, whatever may be the value of his time, and every lady a parasol, whatever may be the shade of her complexion; so every house has a piano, whether the owner is, or is not, one of those, "who can tell the tuning from the overture." There is generally musical talent enough in every circle, to promote conversation at a tea-party; and there is seldom a summer's night, that is without a serenade.

Perhaps I have said enough to show you that there is much activity, enterprise and intelligence in this community; that it exhibits what is the best result, and surest support of liberty, self-respect; that keeps them equally from offering or suffering violence, and induces a deference to public opinion, and a disposition to maintain law and order. A more

peculiar and unmixed character, arising from its homogeneous population, will be found here than in any other city in the United States. There is none of the show and attractions of ostentatious and expensive luxury ; but a great deal of cheerful, frank hospitality, and easy, social intercourse. In short, if a man can limit his wishes to living in a beautiful country, among a hospitable people, where he will find only simple, unobtrusive pleasures, with a high degree of moral and intellectual refinement, he may here be gratified.

LETTER XVI.

GENIUS, CHARACTER, AND MANNERS OF THE INHABITANTS OF NEW-ENGLAND.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE features of national character seem almost as marked as those of particular species of the human race ; and the long period through which they may be discovered, under various accidents and changes of fortune, as well as government, is, on first observation at least, a subject of surprise. We may remark, in some families, a predominance of good or bad qualities, a series of virtuous or vicious

conduct, for successive generations. That nations exhibit a peculiar bias throughout their whole career, is certainly evident from history. Though this may be thwarted or interrupted occasionally, even so as to disappear for a time ; it will be found, on a general view of their whole policy, never to have been destroyed, but its effects may be traced through the entire era of their existence. The Jews, who are altogether an exclusive people, furnish an extreme case. The Romans commenced their career as robbers, and when they rose from their petty villany of a single murder, to the splendid heroism of slaughtering millions ; they continued the same policy, enlarged from the plunder of a neighbouring village, to the aggrandizement of their empire, by the subjection of kingdoms. The Greeks, who invented or improved all the arts and sciences, directed their chief emulation to these, through all their vicissitudes ; and down to the extinction of their nation by the Turks, preserved many remains of this illuminating spirit, when all the rest of the world was involved in darkness. Among modern nations, the French are supposed to have many of the characteristics which they had in the days of Julian ; and as to the Spaniards, we have it from Count Oxenstiern, that when Adam was permitted to revisit the world, he found every thing altered and new, till he came to Spain ; when he at once exclaimed, " Ah ! this I know ; every thing is here just as I left it." The English have been remarkable, through many ages, for their sub-

mission to the authority of fashion in dress, and their unyielding adherence to the principles of civil liberty. The Germans unite a gravity of temperament with a mystical frivolity ; their passions seem seated in their brain, and strike out into strange vagaries of fancy ; while those of the Italians flow through all the channels of the blood, beat with its pulse, and are profound and true to nature.

I have made these remarks by way of introduction to some sketches of the genius, character, and manners of the people in this section of the Union ; because I think these partake strongly of their origin, and cannot be well understood without keeping that in view. We have not quite completed two centuries, since the first bark of our forefathers anchored under the wintry shores of Plymouth ; and two centuries, we may hope, will form only a small part of our national existence. The period is not long enough to predict what will be our character in after ages, when time shall have exposed it to all the successive temptations of adversity and prosperity ; when all the accidents of fortune, and the progress of luxury, shall have been tried, to change or corrupt it. Yet, as far as we have proceeded, it has not become unworthy of its origin, or essentially different from its first principles. The impetus originally given, still remains, modified, but not eradicated. There is something less of exterior roughness ; but this only makes the inherent traits more distinct ; as a surface of marble

exhibits its veins more clearly when polished, than in a rude state.

The men who planted this division of the United States, came from the most virtuous part of the English nation. They carried their severe notions of religious purity to a degree of austerity; and their assertion of civil and political liberty, to the dreadful alternative of a civil war. They were part of that body of men which brought a faithless sovereign to the scaffold, and raised their country to that glorious pitch of power and prosperity, which she enjoyed during the early part of the commonwealth. Some even of the chief actors in these scenes came to this country from choice, and others to escape from proscription. All the founders of these colonies, were the inveterate enemies of the perfidious despotism of the Stuarts, and stern seceders from the arrogant sway of the English prelates and Scotch presbyters. A large proportion of them were of the condition of gentlemen, and their followers were all virtuous, substantial yeomen. A striking and indisputable inference has been drawn, from the comparative purity of our language, respecting the class of people who settled the country. They came from various counties of England, in some of which a jargon scarcely intelligible is spoken to this day by the lower sorts of the people. But, among our forefathers, if there were any of this description, there never were enough to keep up this corrupt dialect; and even the provincialisms that were retained or generated

here, are very few in number. This test of language is one of the strongest that can be adduced ; and in this instance supports well-known historical facts.

Their first object in seeking a new world, was to enjoy freedom in religion ; the next, to obtain civil and political liberty. They came exposed to every hardship, and manfully encountered them for these noble purposes. The hopes of enriching themselves could form a very small part of the motives of the first settlers, or of those who followed them, for two or three generations. For a considerable period their daily fare was coarse, and sometimes scanty. The rigid practice of piety, industry, and temperance, fortified their minds and bodies, to endure the sufferings incident to the inhabitants of a new country. These virtues gradually ameliorated their condition, and procured them an increase of their means, and the substantial comforts of life. If they had been satisfied with this result, they would not have risen above an establishment of Quakers or Moravians ; but continued frugal, virtuous, thrifty and obscure. They however, possessed more elevated designs ; there were among them both clergymen and laymen, who were profound scholars, who had imbibed in the English universities the soundest conviction of the value of learning, and that religion especially could not be maintained without it. Hence, they never lost sight of the necessity of instruction ; schools were at once established, and they founded a college during

the first generation. It was this enlightened course that gave a peculiar tone to their character. Talent and education were assured of their legitimate importance, and they constantly showed themselves the watchful and jealous guardians of every religious and civil right.

These men belonged to that class who were called, or rather stigmatized, with the name of Puritans ; yet, under this name, the most virtuous and energetic part of the English nation were at one time enrolled. The Independents were the persons who kept the state from falling under the despotism of the Stuarts, and religion perhaps from relapsing into the power of the Pope. There were of course many fanatics among them, and their extravagances were imputed to the whole. In those who came here, there was great rigour and adhesiveness to their particular tenets ; yet fewer absurd fanatics than in England. There was no deficiency, however, of bigotry or narrow-minded prejudices ; and these were often most obstinately manifested in trifles. This was the fault of the age, when trifles were magnified into importance ; or, to speak more justly, when trifles were considered the indications of fundamental principles : the latter were in fact the subject of contest, in the name of the former.

Many circumstances contributed to preserve an austere bias of character in these colonists. The country gave no rich productions to create wealth and luxury ; and therefore offered few inducements for men to expatriate themselves, except they were

stimulated by the same motives that led the first settlers. The gradual increase of the population left the first comers a preponderating influence, and obliged successive emigrants to assimilate themselves to them. The plain and simple manners, the gravity of character, the sternness of religious principle, the bigotry of their opinions, repelled all foreigners, and almost all Englishmen of other sects, from coming here, and all such who crossed the Atlantic, went into other colonies. Education was entirely in the hands, or under the direction of the clergy, who were all Independents and Calvinists. The first magistrates of the country were all men of noble simplicity and rigid virtue; and there was no levity or profligacy of conduct in the leading men in society, that could countenance or excuse any frolicking or debauchery among inferior people. These were the principal causes, which gave that severe aspect to the manners, that unity of faith and practice, both in religion and politics, which continued unchanged for a century.

The introduction of the Episcopal Church, favoured by the court, from motives of policy rather than religion, and of other sects,—the mission of governors from England, the increase of property, of commerce, and of the capital, created progressive alterations. These, however, grew imperceptibly, and their influence was only superficial. The principles, prejudices, and habits of the puritans, had taken too deep root, and were too widely spread,—I may add, fortunately, to be eradicated. They

continued little diminished, to the Revolution, of which they were one of the original causes. The concussion of war, and, above all, of civil war,—the introduction of many foreigners,—the sudden alliance with France, after a century and a half of deadly animosity, heightened with all the strength of provincial and religious bitterness,—the cordial reception and intermixture of the most accomplished noblesse of the French court, with the plain citizens of this hitherto remote and secluded country, (strange contrast!)—the changes, the excitement, the patriotism, the profligacy created by war, passed away, leaving few traces, out of the large towns. And since the Revolution, the wide extension of commerce, the great accumulation of wealth, the spirit of enterprise, stimulated and exerted to the utmost,—the ardent feeling of adventure, which has sent so many young men into every part of the world in pursuit of pleasure, instruction, or gain,—all these, combined, have left the solid fabric of our character and manners as unimpaired, as the granite rocks of our country;—and the variations they have produced, render it only more striking to the philosophical observer.

The original system of discipline for the young, which is still almost every where in force, turned principally on two points,—the subjugation of the passions, and a perfect equality of standing,—giving to seniority the chief and almost exclusive claim to deference. Under the first of these, was included the discouragement of vivacity, the reproof of all

gayety, the condemnation of all angry emotions and impetuous expression. The perpetual lessons inculcated, during childhood and youth, were to be mild, submissive, serious, devotional, and respectful to age. All brilliant sallies were checked, and any impatient sprightliness frowned upon. A steady composure, a calm and gentle demeanour, a slow and cautious habit of reasoning, were held up as the objects of imitation. The equality of condition, which was carried very far in society, was perfect in all the schools; the children were all on a footing; the station or wealth of the parent caused no distinctions,—they were all allowed the same advantages, and exposed to the same treatment; and all taught to bow to every passing stranger, and to every old man in the village. Some change has taken place in this respect;—wealthy parents have sought for more select schools,—their children perceive sooner the advantages they possess, and a little arrogance on this account is not wholly repressed;—childish impetuosity and juvenile presumption are partially tolerated, under the idea that their talents will be more readily developed, and their character be rendered more decisive and enterprising. It is not perhaps quite decided that this is an improvement.

A punctual attendance on public worship from infancy, and the great use that was made of the Bible in the schools, contributed very much to the establishment of sober habits. The universal practice of perusing the scriptures, which, in former

times, constituted almost the exclusive reading, had a great influence, not only in promoting religion among the people, but upon their manners and habits of thinking. The prudential maxims, the solemn impassioned denunciations against offenders, in the Old Testament ; the peaceful, earnest exhortations, to humility, patience, moderation, and charity, in the New ; were so often heard and read, that they could not fail of producing some effect. In fact, all the education of the country was blended with them, and in all public speaking, frequent references were made to this knowledge, as being most common with the hearers, as well as the speakers. It was not only exhortation or argument, that was thus rendered more impressive, but a witty allusion to scripture, if not indecorous, would be the species of illustration most widely relished and understood. This general and constant use of the scriptures produced another incidental advantage ;—it kept up a comparative purity in the language of the people,—the clear and simple English of our old translation was easily understood, and being in such constant use, the whole style of writing and speaking was founded upon it.

Every system will be liable to a particular class of ill consequences, resulting from the mistake or incapacity of those who are reared under it. Thus, in some countries, where it is sought to excite the vivacity of children, where they are taught to be graceful, where their sprightly sallies are applauded, and they are urged to make a display ;—

we are sure to encounter a great deal of the “ vivacity of inanity,” to be depressed with a tedious gayety, and to yawn under the efforts of an artificial sprightliness. Under the stoical plan of subduing the passions and controlling even their harmless emotions, the simulation that ensues, will be of an opposite kind; and the annoyance it produces more negative; downright dulness will take the mask of gravity; a constitutional indifference and lifeless apathy will pretend to be calm reason and profound reflection; a cool, calculating cunning, will assume the garb of prudent caution and reserve. It is in vain to attempt to raise any strong emotion in such individuals; they turn the edge and blunt the point of every mental weapon; wit or argument are both powerless; to these they are impervious.

If I were writing a treatise, I might apologize for this digression.—The results of the education I have mentioned, might be inferred without seeing them. Such a people must be serious, reflecting, and cold in their manners; that they are the former, cannot be disputed, any more than that they are the calmest people in their department, of any in the world. I use the word calmest, rather than coldest, as more truly applicable. Could such tuition be introduced under a despotism; were it compatible with it, the subjects would be the most quiet of all slaves. But here, where it is given under a government, whose leading principle is the *minimum* of restraint, its object is to avoid rashness and violence, and to make the citizens deliberate and

orderly. The constant habit of political and religious discussion, and the familiarity with law proceedings, tend to nourish acuteness and foresight in reasoning, as well as in perceiving the actual relation of things. There is so much liberty, such entire equality of privileges; enterprise is so unfettered, that there must be great intensity in thought, and great energy in action. There are no people more capable of measured excitement, or more steadily persevering; there are none who can be made to feel so much, and, at the same time, exhibit so little exterior emotion. Pantomime is absolutely unknown. Those who have been taught to give their feelings vent in gesticulations and exclamations, are confounded at the tranquillity of one of our audiences; yet the proof, that this is not owing to insensibility, is the profound and motionless attention which an able orator, either at the bar, in the pulpit, or the senate chamber, will produce among his hearers of every description; this, after all, is the highest scale of applause, the most animating and glorious to the speaker. But an orator must be very cautious in order to create this effect: it must depend rather on the steady heat, than on the warmth of his manner, to succeed. He must have complete control of his passions, and resort to vehemence of expression, and a display of emotion, in a very sparing method. I have witnessed a discussion at the Institute, where all the philosophers of France were assembled, that would have provoked open laughter here. I have heard

debates in both Houses of the British Parliament, where the tone would have been much too impetuous for a caucus ; I have heard speeches in Congress commence in such a mock impassioned style, and terminate in heroics, as would have been deemed flatly ludicrous. An orator here loses all influence who gets in a passion ; every body is on guard against the contagion ; he excites only pity or ridicule ; a fiery speaker, in any of our assemblies, is like a live coal fallen on ice ; he may sputter for a moment, but is soon extinguished. He who uses the words that burn, must be so tempered, as not to become heated by their emission ; he must resemble those mountains, from which the lava makes way over a belt of snow, to overwhelm all before it.

I have dwelt long on this subject, to show how far back the origin of our manners may be traced : that it grew out of the soundest and purest part of the English nation ; who in contending against the encroachments and corruptions of the crown and the mitre, were naturally led into the extreme of opposition : that from this body of men proceeded the first colonists of New-England, whose austere principles, and the hardships to which they were exposed, prevented any from joining them, except the most resolute and inflexible. These colonists, thus separated from the rest of the world and its allurements, another chosen people in the wilderness, as they were apt to consider themselves, were here nurtured in hardships and privations. They

were exempt from the defections and relapses, which took place in the mother country after the Restoration: in fact, desertion went on there, and recruiting flourished here, until this portion became the most numerous and respectable part of the Independent, Dissenting interest. Their tenets here were steadily maintained; every thing around harmonized with their severity; and as there was neither example nor reward to entice seceders, none fell off, except those who were unable to sustain so much stern self-denial. The principles of the Puritans were, therefore, inculcated, uninterruptedly in every school, and practised in every society; they became so thoroughly incorporated with the whole social system, that even now our manners are deeply imbued with them, though both in theory and practice their rigour, as well as uniformity, are at least greatly relaxed.

The cold, passionless appearance which our manners exhibit, must not, therefore, be taken as the foundation of our character. Under this exterior will be often found a force of humour, an ardour of thought, and energy of action, which surprise those unacquainted with the disposition of the inhabitants. There is a slow, deliberative manner, that is sometimes very provoking to irritable dispositions; but when the occasion calls for it, there is no sluggishness, indifference, or faltering. An eminent individual—who when the occasion required, led his gallant regiment, sword in hand, through the breach, with an impetuosity that ensured victory—

relates of himself an anecdote, which will illustrate these remarks. Talking one day with his superior officer, the passionate, impatient, General Charles Lee, the latter exclaimed, "Why the devil do you stare at me, with your mouth open; why don't you reply quicker?—I say every thing off hand, that comes into my head, and by G—d I am ashamed of my own questions, long before I get your answer."—"He explained to him," (slowly, however,) "that the habit was inveterate; that he supposed it grew out of the situation in which the Puritans were placed; they were persecuted, and obliged to be very cautious with the answers they gave, to avoid difficulties; and this, with many of their habits, had been handed down, and became a part of our education." Watch these people when a conflagration takes place, or any sudden emergency, demanding promptitude, courage, and expedients, and then observe a collection of them, taken any where; the difficulty will be discovered to exist in the abundance, rather than in the deficiency of these qualities.

The style of conversation here, has yet a long progress to make, before it reaches that degree of perfection, which is one of the last and most delightful results of high refinement and crowded society. We have yet to acquire, what Dr. Johnson called, "the fine, full flow of London talk," or the more brilliant and accomplished style of Parisian conversation; that conversation, which made Madame de Stael and so many others who have enjoyed it,

consider exile from the society of Paris, as a most insupportable calamity.* We may hope to approach it in time, because there is no country where the inhabitants depend so much on conversation for their amusement, none where so little resort is had to music, dancing, cards, &c. The reliance on talking for a diversion is nearly universal, in all parties, whether consisting of two, or two hundred, with both sexes and all ages. Such habits may lead to a finished style hereafter, but at present after surmounting the weather, and family inquiries, we are too apt to mistake disputation and argument for conversation. We have so many professional men, so many sects with their wire-drawn subtleties, so many legislators, and the habit is so general of taking an interest in one or all of these pursuits, that conversation is too often infected with their peculiar pedantry.† Yet to harangue, to argue, or to controvert, are not to converse. Very able men sometimes assume from habit a mode of discussion, that only wants, “Mr. Speaker” or “my Christian Friends,” or “may it please your

* In the 14th Number of the Edinburgh Review, article of Marmontel's *Memoirs*, there are some just remarks on the faults to which this brilliant conversation is prone.

† The narrow habits of the bar are carried into Congress and all our legislatures; where from the number of lawyers those bodies contain, the predominant mode of discussion is more like special pleading, than the debating of statesmen. This led to the remark of a very shrewd observer, “that Congress certainly contained a great many men of ability and extensive information; they appeared like statesmen, till a debate commenced; but this was always the handful of chesnuts, that would make them forget the parts they were acting; they then fell at once into their natural habit of scrambling to invent subtle distinctions, and maintain small points, with all the acuteness and finesse of attorneys.”

Honors'' prefixed, to make it a regular speech, a sermon, or a plea. Graceful and rapid narratives, easy, unaffected remarks, sudden, unexpected turns, a light, obvious irony,* glancing allusions, leading questions, sprightly repartee, assertion without dogmatism, and serious observation without formality, are some of the elements that give a charm to conversation : and if argument is brought forward, it should not be like a charge of heavy dragoons, bearing down all before it, and trampling under foot by mere dead weight ; but rather like a flying incursion of light cavalry, which if it does not carry off the prize by an unexpected assault, retreats out of sight immediately.

A forensic, argumentative discussion may be a very good exercise occasionally for students, but adds little to the pleasure of social intercourse, as we perceive at once that it is neither an exhibition of playful wit, or profound thought, but a mere display of logical acuteness, a resolute defence of small points, a struggle not for truth but for victory. This vicious inclination to perpetual arguing, is frequently shewn to a person recently returned from abroad, in a way, that is amusing or vexatious as his humour may be. If such a person when asked about the countries he has left, endeavours in perfect good faith to give the impressions he has received, his information may perhaps be

* Irony however in this country particularly is very apt to be misunderstood, and the person who uses it taken literally. It is a habit that results from a more advanced and complicated state of society than what exists here.

disputed by some individual who has passed all his life snugly arguing at home ; and then the unfortunate traveller must either be prepared to go into a course of reasoning, against the most determined cavilling, under a manifest impossibility of convincing, or resign the subject with a smile to the impertinence of his antagonist.

There is one advantage we derive from education, that may be justly valued. Opinion is met by opinion, and not by violence. The dirk and the pistol are hardly known as arguments, or needed as correctives. Duels are almost unheard of, except among military men, and then chiefly confined to subalterns. There is hardly any person of mature age in society, that would dare to violate public feeling, by engaging in a personal contest. If there is not always good-temper, there is at least good-nature, and a man is disgraced who shows a want of it. Personal ferocity is so much discouraged, that he who cannot subdue his disposition, must take to the woods. A boxing match, or a blow, are of much more rare occurrence than they were a generation since ; the habit of applauding or stimulating such feats, was renounced with our transatlantic allegiance.

The accumulation of wealth, the frequency and rapidity of intercourse with all parts of our own and many foreign countries, has had some influence. The former gave the means, and the latter furnished the examples, which could not be imitated without a relaxation of the primitive rigour and

simplicity of society, and an emancipation from some narrow prejudices. Still the progress of luxury, and the innovations on ancient opinions, have proceeded in a very measured manner. A little more elegance, a moderate increase of luxurious comforts, and greater liberality, if not greater candour, in matters of opinion, are the present limits of the change. Hospitality on a moderate scale of expense, and an easy style of social intercourse, still maintain their ground against mere parade and idle, insipid etiquette. The style of manners is in the right line to reach perfection; for this consists in chastened ease, polished simplicity, and total absence of affectation and pretension. If none can boast of having reached this point, yet at least, in pursuit of it, they have not deviated into false methods. That sort of bustling importance, a loud step, a spreading diameter of movement, a rustling approach, an affected tone of voice, an assumed confidence, and all the train of restless manœuvres to obtain personal consequence, which are so fashionable in some countries of Europe, fail here entirely. It is quite amusing to observe some foreigners, or some of our young men on their first return from abroad, practising these airs in vain: there is no corresponding flutter; they are met with such a calm, ruinous composure, that they are soon abashed, and forced to adopt a natural, tranquil demeanour. If they have not intrinsic merit enough, to sustain themselves in this simple state, they must

sink till they find their level, and remain quiet in a corner.

In alluding to the increase of wealth, as producing an effect on society, it may be remarked, that its influence is less here than in Europe. On the Exchange, among merchants in the prosecution of their business, it is of course the first inquiry, the prevailing solicitude, the universal aim. Intelligence is so much diffused, the processes for multiplying riches have become so numerous, through the extension of commerce, that there are few persons who do not strive for something more than a mere subsistence. The maxim, that wealth is power, is very widely known, and the rivals for this power are numerous. But its votaries are not all inordinate ; some are satisfied with obtaining a moderate share of it, while a great number are content to gain a decent competence, in the various pursuits of public or professional life. But wealth is still of less relative importance here than in older countries. And this advantage grows out of the noble simplicity of our institutions, and of our public characters. The accumulation of wealth in the aristocracy of Europe, has so accustomed the subjects of those countries to a gaudy display and parade, that no man can fill a high station without them ; a great statesman, or a great commander, could not exist there as they have done in former times and do still among us ; without a retinue, an equipage, and the costly profusion of the table. If the person who fills any considerable station does not possess a fortune, the government

must either provide for him, by salaries that crush their finances, or he must retire from the stage. The public are so accustomed to the display of opulence, that they think respectability cannot exist without it. A bishop, therefore, must have a princely revenue; a minister or a commander must possess a great income, to over-awe the vulgar, or he cannot hold his situation. A luxurious display is so common; opulence is considered so essential to dignity, that great talents must have great wealth, to support an appearance in the world, which a wrong estimate of wealth and talents respectively, renders necessary. We go here into the opposite extreme; but the simplicity that surrounds our public employments, keeps up the respect due to talent, and makes riches of less importance. Mere wealth has seldom attempted, and still more rarely succeeded, in a struggle for public favours, against talent without it.

The plain and modest manner in which our highest magistrates, and all persons in public life, are obliged to live, from their having such low salaries, and frequently such small fortunes; tends to keep down the consequence of wealth, and to prevent a ruinous, idle ostentation, from becoming fashionable. Expenses run more in the line of real hospitality, of substantial pleasures, and enjoyments of an intellectual description. The cost of showy equipages goes into a hospitable table; the savings from frivolous extravagance in dress, are converted into wine that has travelled farther than Alexander.

with full as much power to subdue the world, and more to cheer it ; the wages of useless servants decorate our walls, or our libraries, with the productions of genius. Ostentation is exhibited in no form of expense, except perhaps in our houses. There is a taste for having large and elegant houses, when the owner enters into no correspondent expenditure. Should this style of building, and a taste for the luxuries of the table, be carried much farther in the capital, it will recall the observation that was once made on a city of Italy, of which it was said : “ that the inhabitants feasted as if they had not a “ day to live, and built as if they were never to “ die.”

Another circumstance which tends powerfully to repress extravagant expense, are the laws regulating the division of property among heirs. Children, in the eye of the law, have all equal rights, and if no will is made, the parent’s estate is divided among them equally. Natural affection commonly acts on this principle, which it may seem to have dictated ; though sometimes the partiality, but more often the vanity of an individual may give a principal part of his estate to one child, under the impulse of some vague, confused feelings of pride, about preserving his name : a foolish expectation, that is often productive of cruel injustice, and is always followed by disappointment. Even the permanent aristocratic system of Europe, for perpetuating certain families, is subject to numerous, and some of them strange, accidents. But here it is a staring

absurdity ; because the design must be defeated. The principle runs counter to the spirit of our institutions,—and our legislatures will always assist every combination of heirs, to break entails. The only mode of sustaining a family is by education ; by implanting in the minds of children, prudence, discretion, and under the guidance of these virtues, a degree of public spirit, that may endear them to their fellow-citizens. There is nothing but a succession of abilities and useful services, that can retain public esteem ; there is no rank and no possession, so protected by the laws against the mischief which folly and profligacy will create, that they will survive it, to descend entire to some more virtuous representative. Public esteem and respect can only be secured by each man for himself ;—no one can value himself long on the merits of his father or grandfather ;—the virtues or the fame of his ancestors may, indeed, serve him for a favourable introduction, but he must then rely on himself ; and he, perhaps, falls even lower, if he is unable to imitate their conduct.

The constant division of property, prevents any great estate from being long kept together. The current of fortune may accumulate its golden sands in one spot, but the first storm, or the first ebbing tide, will scatter it away, and heap it in a different place. Wealth is not often preserved through three generations, because it cannot be placed in fixtures, out of the power of individuals to dissipate it. A man, therefore, with considerable wealth, who

maintains his family in elegance, is obliged to economize a large part of his income; and even then, when it comes to be divided among his children, it will not enable all of them to live in the same style with their father. This successive dispersion of the riches that industry, skill, and good luck have brought together, is attended with this useful consequence; that every rational man, satisfied, from what he daily sees, of the uncertain tenure of wealth, gives all his children an education, that may enable them to exist after its loss. Every man learns some profession or mystery, that may serve him in case of need. The *fruges consumere nati* form a very small number;—almost every man is occupied with production.

The fluctuation in wealth, which is here so incessant, prevents too much arrogance in its possessor, or, at least, hinders it from being hereditary. A good name, to be sure, is something;—it would be hard, indeed, if it were not; but those who are in possession of the first rank in society, can maintain it only against the intrusion of vulgar pretensions and impudent mediocrity. It is impossible to exclude real merit;—this takes rank at once, with as little opposition, as courage in the hour of danger. The prejudices elsewhere existing against certain professions and callings cannot be exerted here to render the person who follows them ridiculous, if his character be respectable. A man is only obnoxious to this kind of obloquy, when he has suddenly risen on the wheel of fortune, and

gives himself airs from her caprices in his favour ; the revenge of society is then furnished by memory. But men of the greatest eminence in this country have risen from the deepest obscurity ; they have “ achieved greatness,” and the attempt to reproach them with that obscurity, would here be deemed absurd. This is one generous triumph over the narrow bigotry of aristocracy. Talents not only find the way, from poverty and depression, to be fostered and distinguished ; but the truth, which the privileged would suppress in Europe, is here often felt that nature makes more real gentlemen, than even rank or fashion. This state of society will, however, offer some difference in its aspect, from one, where those who constitute the fashionable part of it, are formed and finished out of a certain exclusive portion, from materials that are, perhaps, intrinsically inferior. Our society must present more energy and robustness, from being so frequently crossed by the native vigour of wild stocks. There are many who, reared in prosperity, are too refined, or too feeble, when a reverse comes, to struggle successfully with the talent that has acquired hardihood and force, under the adversity from which it is emerging ;—many such, who would have discharged the duties of superior situations respectably and gracefully, recede from an eager competition. They sink away, and are lost in the shade. This misfortune, if it be one to society, excites only a transient, individual pity, and is without a remedy.

Intelligent and cultivated minds are scattered over the whole country ; the high tone of moral sentiment which is the consequence, is one great source of our strength. Discerning persons will not confound two very distinct things, fashion and civilization, together ; and will not mistake a want of the brilliant and disciplined manners of the first, for a deficiency of the last. They may frequently see a degree of awkwardness and shyness bordering on rusticity ; where at the same time may be found the truest and best results of civil society. There is throughout these states a general abhorrence of violence, a submission to the laws, a gentleness of demeanour, a deference to talent, a desire of improvement, a diffusion of knowledge and a degree of intellectual cultivation, which mark an advanced state of civilization. There are two or three small cities in Connecticut, and many villages, where a circle, composed of intelligent and refined people, may be found, particularly New-Haven, the seat of Yale College, Hartford, and Litchfield, whose civilizing influence extends over all the district about them. In Massachusetts, there are also many such circles. Salem, from whence commerce is very actively and successfully pursued, and where it has deposited a great deal of wealth, is remarkable for the retired, secluded habits of its population ; but contains some individuals who have made distinguished attainments in science and literature, in which they have published several works. Worcester, Northampton, and Newburyport, may also be cited, among others, for having produc-

ed distinguished men. Portland, Hallowell, and Brunswick, the seat of Bowdoin College, in Maine,—Portsmouth, Concord, and Hanover, the seat of Dartmouth College, in New-Hampshire,—Windsor and Burlington, in Vermont,—Providence and Newport, in Rhode-Island, may be mentioned in this list. In these small towns are to be found able, professional men,—and in some of them, country gentlemen, with very competent fortunes, who generally possess a very salutary influence in their districts. These are, besides, dispersed in lesser towns, and thus no village is left without some men of liberal education, who contribute to the diffusion of information and the elevation of public sentiment.*

The traces of primitive manners are more visible in the country, where they could be more easily preserved from change. The man who, from having received a liberal education, and possessing a considerable landed estate, is entitled to the appellation of a country gentleman, was always a person of influence. To maintain this influence, grave, and rather severe habits, a plain calm dignity of manner, a strict attention to religious duties, were necessary,—and also to abstain from all jovial and boisterous amusements. No levity, no immorality, was permitted in any one who held any public sta-

* This diffusion of information and refinement is a great advantage. The celebrated Abbè Correa, one or two of whose shrewd and brilliant remarks I have already quoted; said of the State of Pennsylvania, that it was like a superb Sphinx: Philadelphia was the head, but all the rest was beast.

tion. Such was the country gentleman, who held any office in the state in former times, and such, in some instances, he still continues. But this dignified and austere cast of character has not always been fortunate,—at least in recent times, in giving the same habits to his children. The sons have often fallen short of the fathers' reputation, or wholly disgraced it, and wasted their estate in profligate dissipation. I have seen some instances, where this misfortune grew out of mistaken principles of education, and an adherence in the parent, to certain forms of behaviour which may have answered in earlier times, but became inexpedient as society advanced. There was something patriarchal in a family establishment formerly; the whole household were assembled at morning and evening prayers; the servants were not menials, and the children mixed freely with them. The dignity of the parent kept up a reserve that inspired awe, and restrained the confidence of his children. No very nice distinction was made in the kind of respect that was due from the children, on account of their youth, or that which was paid by the hired people, on account of their station. These latter were seldom born, and seldom died, servants; they served for a time, till their wages would enable them to begin clearing land for a farm. In such an establishment, the gradations of respect turned more on the point of age than any other; and perhaps the children might have been so treated two or three generations since, without any ill consequences.

As the state of things altered, as the domestic discipline was a little relaxed, the reserve and coldness of the parent drove the boys more into the company of dependants, who gave them vulgar ideas and clownish manners; and when they succeeded to their fathers' property, it was only to waste it in vicious, low excesses.

The general equality of property marks a vigorous and healthy state of society, where the two extremes bear a small relative portion to the whole. Every man may be, and every farmer is, a landed proprietor; the relationship of landlord and tenant is not numerous; it might be advantageous if it were more so. A young farmer beginning life, lays out all his means, and runs in debt for the purchase of his farm, which keeps him incumbered for a number of years; he has not capital sufficient to become a land owner. If he began by hiring a farm for a few years, rents are so low, that he would be increasing his capital, and eventually become a proprietor with more facility; and at the end of fifteen years would be a richer farmer, if he passed the first seven as a tenant, than if he had commenced the first year on his own land. This, however, is little practised; the natural pride of owning land prevails over these calculations; but the gradual progress in the tenure of property is increasing the number of tenants and landlords. For a long and almost indefinite period, at least till our vast western regions are peopled, this must be productive of mutual advantage in the older districts. Capitalists, by

making investments in lands, lend their capital to agriculture, and the tenant having his little property all active, can employ it with success, and get beforehand in his affairs, to become a proprietor afterwards. The mischievous tendency of the system, to engross all lands in the hands of a few, and by deriving the greatest possible amount of rent, reduce the tenant to dependence, and the labourer to pauperism, cannot happen in this country for centuries.

There are few persons here, who can suffer absolute distress from poverty. That which arises among the wealthier classes, from great reverses, I am not considering; but an uncertainty about the common means of subsistence can never happen in the country, except to the miserable drunkard, or the unfortunate victim of some bodily or mental infirmity, who of course are supported by the public, when destitute of friends; the labouring man, with health and good habits, may always obtain the comforts of life, and increase his savings. Every industrious man may look forward with certainty, to becoming the proprietor in fee simple of a small farm; and there are thousands who, with nothing but their labour and good management, have found themselves, at the middle of their lives, owners of a large one, producing ample means to give them all the comforts of life.

As unremitting exertion is not requisite to obtain the common means of living, it is seldom found, except among those, who, under the impulse of

ambition or avarice, strive for something higher, and who of course form the minority. That steady, mechanical, mill-horse toil, which is general in Europe, is not often seen here; and where it is not necessary, it cannot be expected. The whole quantity of work performed in a given time, however, will not be less here than there. The manner is more irregular; the labour is more by fits and starts; at certain periods it is very arduous and effective. When once stimulated, no people perform more in a short period; they will not trot so long patiently in a harness; but bring them to a competition, to a match against time, and they will show blood and bone too. They are susceptible of excitement in a very high degree, and for a long period: when they once "*spring to it*," the results are prodigious. After the late war, the American and English officers compared notes on the frontiers, with respect to certain work that had been done, and where both parties had exerted themselves to make a rapid progress: it was found, that in ship-building, in making intrenchments, and other efforts, our people had exceeded the others, by at least one-fourth. This was what might be expected from their respective habits. Some improvement in our practice may be made; yet it may be hoped the period is distant when incessant, unvaried drudgery, which destroys all elasticity of mind and body; shall become indispensable to the support of our population, but more regular efforts than are

now habitual, would be accompanied with many good consequences.

This effect will, I think, grow out of the improvement that is now taking place in agriculture, and also from the gradual increase of manufactures. Our system of farming was so simple, so bad in short, that it left the farmer with much time unemployed, and of course very small gains. The labour was very intense at certain periods, such as planting, the hay harvest, &c. and very sluggish, the rest of the time. But when greater skill is employed in farming, the labours of the year are more equally distributed. A great deal of ploughing is now done in the autumn that was formerly confined to the spring; the collection of manures, the dressing of lands, now go on at seasons that were before passed in comparative idleness. If there were no increase of production and wealth from an improved state of agriculture, its tendency to form more regular habits of industry, would be a sufficient motive for its promotion.

The extremes of heat and cold have some influence on the customs of labouring people, and still more on the habits of those who use exercise for health and amusement. It is a general fault, that we do not take exercise enough, and the only excuse is, that in extreme heat, and extreme cold, it is difficult; and it is not easy to maintain a habit which is liable to long interruptions. Reason would be well employed in trying to make exercise more fashionable with both sexes and with all

classes ; and particularly in persuading the public, that there is nothing ignominious in walking, and that young men should prefer mounting a horse to lounging in a gig. A more frequent practice of manly exercise is a desirable object, for the young men, especially, of all classes. A stranger, who has seen Europe, and should then observe our highways, could not fail of being struck with the excessive difference in the proportions between those who walk, and those who ride here, and on the other side of the Atlantic. There are here no brilliant equipages, as are frequent there ; but in this country every one rides ; few on horseback, but in vehicles of some sort almost all are riding,—very few are on foot,—and this circumstance would alone indicate to him, very truly, not only the ease, but the love of it, that prevail in this country.

This general equality is not wholly without exceptions : virtuous industry is sure of being rewarded with a competence ; and a vicious, abandoned course, will entail misery on itself every where. We have no palaces, and very few hovels ; a log-house is the first shelter for those who are making encroachments on the forest, to bring new land under cultivation. This rude shelter is generally replaced in a few years, by a more commodious dwelling. I have one instance of contrast in my mind, for an exception to the general condition, which I may cite, after premising, that it forms an extreme case.

On the bank of one of the most beautiful rivers, in this country of beautiful rivers, in the midst of some extensive park-like grounds, there stands a modest mansion, whose Grecian outline and fair proportions are a happy type of the virtue, hospitality, and refinement, that reside beneath its roof. The road leading to the entrance of this estate, lies on the immediate bank of the river, which is fringed with a growth of birch, ash, oak, and evergreen trees, and various native shrubs, planted by nature in the most picturesque manner. A short distance from the gate, in a small nook, formed by the projection of a fence, where the bank rose a little above the road, there stood a shapeless hut, tenanted by a solitary hag, of the most ominous aspect. This strange being, after leading a life of the lowest profligacy in a village at about a mile's distance, had selected this spot with some judgment, if not fancy, to establish herself, when she could no longer find a home in the village. Having gradually collected from the river shore various pieces of floating lumber, she hired the aid of a carpenter for one day, which was sufficient to complete her residence; where she established herself, a few years before the mansion I have mentioned, was built. A little labour, but chiefly the charity of the village, afforded her sustenance. As her strength declined, she could go no further than to the kind family of a worthy farmer, who was nearly the same distance from her on one side, that the proprietor of the domain was on the other. From these she obtained

her food ; the river supplied her with water, and its shores with driftwood for fuel, which in hard weather the neighbours sent "their people" to cut up. Her dwelling proved, very forcibly, how few are the real wants of human nature, and how great are the sufferings and privations it can endure. Towards the close of her life, this solitary creature, half blind, quite deaf, became so decrepit, that, with the aid of her staff, her daily visit to the neighbours was a tedious effort, though the distance was only a few rods. When squatted down to rest herself in one of these excursions, Fuseli might have derived some hints from the object while painting his witch seated under a toadstool on the ground, out of which they both seemed to have grown the night preceding. I have sometimes met her in the gloom of twilight, sitting down by the side of the path in silence, like a fungus on its surface ; and without distinguishing whether it was the sight, the hearing, or the mere vibration of the air, which the pulsation of any breathing thing will create, that gave the alarm,—I have started from a reverie when just on the point of treading on her ; and I have, several times, found my horse, albeit incapable of musing, affected in the same manner. The parish had once or twice placed her, from feelings of humanity, with their poor ; but she could bear to live with no one, and no one could live with her.

This desolate being railed against society, on which she had no hold : she belonged to no nation, for she was born at sea, in a ship coming from

England ; her mother died on the passage, and she never knew her parents ; she had, therefore, as she said, neither kindred nor country. She was preserved, amidst a callous, indifferent world, as a feather may float securely amidst rocks and eddies, where mightier things would perish. Fostered by the eleemosynary care of those, to whom chance had committed a helpless infant, she grew up without check, without guidance, and without encouragement. She led a life of the lowest profligacy, redeemed by no single virtue except honesty. The just prejudices of the inhabitants had caused her sometimes to be accused of dishonesty, but an examination always cleared her from this crime. She had two daughters, who left her as she became infirm, to pursue, if possible, a worse career than her own, in the lowest haunts of the metropolis.—On making a visit not long since to my friend, as we were approaching his grounds, I perceived this hovel in a ruinous state, with the roof torn off. I pointed “to the blackened ridge pole, of the ruined shealing,” and accused him of having ousted poor Meg ; he reddened slightly at the charge, like a man incapable of inhumanity ; and told me that, having grown extremely feeble, she had been removed to a farm-house about a mile below, there she received such care as common humanity could bestow ; and there this miserable wretch, desolate and friendless, after lingering about three weeks, terminated a long life of hideous profligacy, with the most frightful execrations and blasphemies.

One of the characteristics of the people generally is inquisitiveness ; this is sometimes carried to an amusing length, and has often been awkwardly caricatured by daubers. The fine and deep vein of humour which Dr. Franklin possessed, was exerted in a well-known story, and has formed the basis of many a miserable imitation. This curiosity is not always impertinent, and often marks an intelligent people. They do not carry it quite to the extent which the Parisians do ; and a man in the best society of Paris, will have as many point-blank questions directed at him, as he will encounter in Connecticut or Vermont. But this disposition to inquiry often proceeds from kind and simple feelings, is commonly accompanied with a degree of communicativeness that shows confidence, and a willingness to give, as well as receive. None but ill tempered persons need dread much annoyance on this score ; because the curiosity may be easily checked by a little address or good-nature. A traveller will always meet (the exceptions will at least be rare) with a friendly, obliging disposition, when in want of information, or any accidental assistance, if he acts with civility : I mean true civility, and not an insolent condescension. There are no people who can perceive, and feel the difference more quickly ; and there are none who are more skilful in regulating themselves accordingly. A person with the Cockney tone of manners, presuming upon that portion of a gentlemanly exterior, that his tailor has been able to give him ; may chance to come in

contact with a man in a plain or even working dress, who may be in every thing his superior; and the degree of satisfaction he will receive, will depend on the style of conversation he may adopt. Generally speaking, it is a good rule to presume every man to be your equal: it will be found that civility is seldom thrown away, even upon an inferior.

If the time should ever arrive that we shall possess a domestic theatre, with authors and actors who have been accustomed, from infancy, to observe and feel the nice shades of local peculiarities, the comic muse will have some worthy offerings from this section of our country. The class of clowns in European comedies, have here their counterparts, but greatly varied by the institutions under which they live. An equal degree of awkwardness, rendered more ludicrous, by a greater degree of education; a good deal of native shrewdness, with a large portion of social simpleness, will give rise to many scenes of comedy. Go a step or two higher, and take individuals of both sexes, who have lived in seclusion, with some natural tendency to eccentricity, and have got all their ideas of society, from books, and of dress, from their own fancy; and watch them when they make an incursion into the world, and the comedian will find them replete with excellent matter. But comedy can never rise among us until we have native actors, who can seize upon the wire edge of what is humorous in character, under which all its sharpness is concealed. There is something peculiar in every national character.

which, like idiom in language, or accent in speaking, a foreigner can rarely, if ever attain.

I have often derived amusement from the singularities to which I here allude, but observed them too vaguely, to attempt their description. I can only offer you a rough sketch of an individual, who fell in my way some time since. Hezekiah K—— left his wife and his home at a mature age, to better his condition by a temporary absence. He came to Boston, *to let himself for help* ; or to express it in other words, entered into service in a gentleman's family, and changed his place but once during this career. His tall and rather gaunt person, was surmounted by an appropriate head, whose sandy locks fringed a countenance of very hard outline, the expression of which was serious, but not gloomy. Had you seen him in the street when the state of Massachusetts was represented *en masse*, a few years ago, you might have taken him for a delegate, or if a distressed traveller had met him on the road, when the Sabbatists were in power, he might have imagined him to be a tithing-man. I do not know in what capacity he originally entered these families ; but he served, on occasion, as a *double* to every servant, from the coachman to the chambermaid. He could drive the horses, cook the dinner, sweep the apartments, and make the beds ; and when he had nothing else to do, would sit down to sew ; making his own clothes and mending his own stockings. With one of these gentlemen he went to Washington, and though in place, he was rather a dissatisfied man,

which arose from two evils ; his dread of the small-pox, and his disgust at the shiftless, sluggish movement of slaves. Whether it was from these circumstances only, or from his having nothing of what Talleyrand calls *the future in his mind*, he had a prejudice against the metropolis of the Union ; and in his plain, inoffensive way, observed, “it was no more like a city than Cambridgeport.”—Perhaps, in some of these points, a European servant would be found to resemble him ; but there is one in which the parallel would cease :—when he left his last place, it was to return home with his wages, to a farm of a hundred acres, which he owned in fee simple.

There is a strong relish throughout this region for a kind of dry humour, that turns upon what is ludicrous in the contrasts and inconsistencies of character. A fondness for quaint comparisons ; a good deal of skill in defeating argument, by involving it in some unexpected conclusion ; a happy adaptation of a story or a parable to the subject in discussion ; an expression of a very strong opinion, with an inevitable inference, but in an indirect way ; with a tone of unyielding gravity and simplicity,—are the chief modes in which this humour is displayed. In the early times of these colonies, the clergy had so much control over all the movements of their parishioners ; their intercourse with them was so direct and constant, that their names and character were frequently brought into view. Though almost invariably treated with respect, yet sometimes they

came in collision with persons, or were placed in circumstances that occasioned ridiculous contrasts. Their formidable coadjutors, the deacons, who stood between them and the people, were obnoxious to a good deal more freedom of handling. The profession of rigid sanctity, and the habit of exterior solemnity, when, as it would sometimes happen, they were accompanied with a great degree of keenness in worldly interest, and occasionally with frailties very incompatible with their situation, were sure to be remarked, and made the subject of ridicule. This was a fruitful source of humorous anecdote, which is now diminishing, because the officers of this description have lost something of their relative consequence, in the progress of society; and politics, commerce, and newspapers, have found their way into every village, and occupied the inhabitants more with distant, general concerns; and broken up that seclusion, which tended to form peculiarities in character and manners.

If I could have recourse to some of our able narrators, I could readily produce numerous specimens of this humorous spirit. At the moment, my memory hardly serves me with the means of making any selection. I can only cite two or three examples, that may perhaps enable you to judge of this disposition. An instance of quaint comparison is related in a town in the western part of Massachusetts, where the clergyman was remarkable for giving his sermon very little connexion with his text. It stood like a sign-post before a house,

where no tavern was kept. When this peculiarity was a subject of conversation, one of his parishioners observed of him, that *if his text had the small-pox, his sermon could'nt catch it.*—A few years ago, at the parade of the artillery election, which takes place on the common in Boston, some confusion took place, as the close of the procession was entering the ground appropriated to the ceremony. The crowd was pressing very hard at the entrance, and the bar was put down before all the representatives had got in. Some of these called out to the officer who had charge of the passage, in a tone expressive of their claim to admission, *We are representatives!*—A man among the crowd immediately vociferated, in the same tone, *We are the people themselves!*

The telling a story, or introducing a parable to have a witty application, is often practised. No instance occurs to my recollection that is not rather hackneyed; and the examples of them which occur in Dr. Franklin's life and works, are known to all the world, and form the best examples. The following anecdote may be new to you, and will illustrate one of the species of humour I have mentioned.—An individual in Connecticut, of great talents and respectable connexions, but who led a graceless, dissipated life, was travelling with a small party, the individuals of which were all known to each other. Among them was a very respectable matron, who, in the course of conversation, began to reproach this rake with the life he led.—She lament-

ed that a man with his abilities, of such a respectable family, should pursue such a course. Her zeal made her very eloquent, and the object of it began to wish to get rid of the discussion. He observed to her, that she was very severe; that people were very much the same; that there was less difference between them than she supposed. O! no, she said; there was nobody so bad as he.—In a deprecating tone and manner, he replied, that most people would act alike, when put in the same situation; that his conduct and her's would be the same, if placed in similar circumstances.—She retorted, that was impossible; that they could never act alike in any case: he thought he could name one;—she defied him:—suppose then, madam, that in travelling, you came to an inn, where all the beds were full except two, and in one of these was a man, and in the other a woman, which would you take?—Why, the woman's, to be sure.—Well, madam, said he, so would I.—Even the lady was obliged to join in the laugh, by which the profligate wit made his escape from a troublesome argument.

I have only one more anecdote to mention, and this I get from a newspaper: it may probably have gone the rounds of many of them, but it is so characteristic, that I shall run the hazard of repeating it. The substance of it is as follows: There made his appearance in Cincinnati, what they called there, I suppose figuratively, "*a good sleek Yankee*:" he carried with him from Pittsburg one thousand dollars in bills, issued by one of the banks

in Cincinnati; he knew too well, that these bills were at 20 per cent. discount, these banks having suspended specie payments. He, however, chose to have the pleasure of visiting the bank, and entering it, went up to the counter, presented his bills with a grave, expecting face, wishing to have specie for them; they replied, they did not pay specie; he seemed a little surprised, but asked if they would give him in exchange the bills of any banks that did pay specie: he was told they had none.—He now took a turn in the bank, and then asked them, if they would give him bills of the “Owl Creek,” or of one or two other “*fog-banks*,” which were by-words even in that country: they told him that they would not be insulted.—Insulted!—he assured them calmly it was no insult.—After taking another turn he asked them, as an ultimatum, if *they would give him any tolerably well executed, counterfeit notes, of any bank in the Union, that did pay specie.*—They talked still louder about being insulted; when their troublesome visiter, after taking a few more turns in the bank, departed.

The character of this people must be in some degree known throughout the United States; in every district there are emigrants from this quarter, and some whole states have been peopled from it; so that their character and manners are in some degree blended with those of every portion of the nation. All who migrate do not, as might be conjectured, present the most favourable specimens, or proceed from the soundest part of the popula-

tion ; yet, in some places, vulgar prejudice has attempted to take even the smallest and worst part of those who leave us, as a fair sample of the whole : but this is only the error of low minds. Thousands go every year to other states, and hundreds fall untimely a sacrifice to sickly climates. The tide of emigration will long continue to flow, undiminished, from a healthy, prolific country ; this must tend to bind us, by intermixing the whole, more strongly together. Our adventurous youth are ever on the wing to find new sources of advantage ; they are carried every where by

“ Such winds as scatter young men through the world,

“ To seek their fortunes farther than at home,

“ Where small experience grows.”

From what I have said, you will perhaps be able to form a just estimate of the general character of your fellow-citizens, in this section of the Union. Those who know them will, I think, allow that they are brave, intelligent, mild, enterprising, and serious ; with much more mental cultivation, and more refinement of sentiment, than either brilliancy of exterior or polish of manner ;—that they are hospitable and benevolent, with very little of etiquette or ostentation ;—that they are dispassionate, by education and habit ; ardent and persevering, from nature and circumstances ;—that in religion, they are disposed to attend more to things than to words ; in politics, more solicitous for freedom, than for sway ;—that the forms of society are simple, its intercourse easy. Those who have a relish for the domestic style of enjoyments, and value its influence, would here

experience great satisfaction. A celebrated diplomatist, whose knowledge of our country equals that of any native, and whose philosophic mind makes him always happy and brilliant in generalizing the results of that knowledge, has said, that the difference between Europe and the United States, was this; "that in America, there was happiness "without pleasure; and in Europe, pleasure without happiness." This, which was applied to the whole country, is fully true of this part of it. Pleasure, as it exists in the great cities of Europe, cannot be found on this side of the Atlantic; the cup of Circe could not be filled among us; but happiness abounds. Even the dissipation of society here at least has a kind of family, domestic air, that makes it perfectly harmless; a solitary relaxation, of which there is too little, rather than too much. All that is public, enticing, and disengaged from household cares; all that fosters the contagion of disordered passions, that keeps up a morbid excitement for dangerous enjoyments, and gives fashion the dominion over reason;—all that kind of dissipation which furnishes moments of keen intoxicating pleasure, and hours of anguish or apathy, must be sought in Europe. Our dissipation is simpler; the *Penates* are always in sight, or at farthest in the next room; there are no irritable, feverish delights to be extracted from it; pleasure would find the scenery and action insipid, where happiness presides with smiling complacency.

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